The Life and Magick of

ALEISTER CROWLEY

John Symonds



DO WHAT THOU WILT every man's darkest shadow

The Catastrophic Life, Love & Drugs of ToMegatherion
The Great Beast of the Revelation whose Number is 666

"And therefore our High Magick is most high if on its snow-wrapped crater-cone we stand, in air too virginal to have known dust of plains or smoke of cities, air to intoxicate us laughing-mad, so that we fling our limbs abroad and scream: "Love is the Law, Love under Will!""

ALEISTER CROWLEY

'ALEISTER' EDWARD ALEXANDER CROWLEY, condemned by the press as 'the wickedest man in the world'

'The Great Beast does Crowley proud. He is the Picasso of the Occult. He bridges the gap between Oscar Wilde and Hitler. He was one of the first to experiment with mescalin, and every orgasm was made part of a ritual. He worked up to eleven grains of heroin a day, enough to kill a roomful of people . . . It's worth reading if only as a contribution to the problem of evil'

Cyril Connolly, Sunday Times

'John Symonds published his life of Aleister Crowley, *The Great Beast*, in 1951. Seven years later, when the climate had become more permissive, he described the sexually magic practices in *The Magick of Aleister Crowley*. The present volume is made up of both these earlier works . . . Crowley's infamy was great; his career was fabulous, prestigious, sordid, sinister and in the word of Victor Neuberg, ostrobogulous. He endeavoured to become a God and ended something less than human, having in the course of 72 years driven more men and women to drink, insanity or death than most incarnate devils'

Times Literary Supplement

'Of all the books, this devastating study is the best . . . the unsung hero of the hippies'

International Times

'Highly entertaining . . . includes (Crowley's) declining years in the Hastings boarding house where John Symonds, his biographer, met him in 1945, as a spent mage living on gin and heroin'

Sunday Telegraph

'The Great Beast is highly readable, and the net effect is of a cautionary tale, whose moral is that paranoid exhibitionists may have interesting lives but not very enviable ones. Crowley, although a bit of a fraud, believed in magic with his whole being. If you didn't look too closely, he was the ideal Cult Figure for the New Beatniks. The Beatles even put his portrait among the crowd on their Sergeant Pepper album. And what if you do look more closely? You are liable to discover that Crowley is at once more complex, more vital and more silly than you ever gave him credit for'

Colin Wilson, Books and Bookmen

Aleister Crowley, the man who said: 'I don't wish to nauseate the body, but I may do just a little more than is quite pleasant...', the Great Beast that slouches its way toward Bethlehem to be reborn?

John Symonds was appointed the literary executor of the Great Beast's estate on Crowley's death in 1947. His access to the private papers and journals has allowed a series of beautifully produced high-price volumes that focus on the magician's store of lore and revelations with the severest pair of eyes in modern occultism: The Great Beast and The Magick of Aleister Crowley (now augmented into this one complete and comprehensive cheap edition, for the first time in paperback) and, with co-editor Kenneth Grant, The Confessions of Aleister Crowley, The Magical Record of the Beast 666 and Magick (from Magick in Theory and Practice by the Master Therion). The author has also prepared Crowley's novel, Moonchild, and his Diary of a Drug Fiend for British publication, and for collectors an exclusive edition of White Stains. Symonds is himself the author of ten novels, among his favourites being The Lady in the Tower, The Only Thing That Matters, Bezill and the particularly wellreceived Prophecy and the Parasites. His range in the perennial philosophies stretches over much published work, including Thomas Brown and the Shakers, the story of the Shaker communes of transcendentalist America. His children's books. published widely and translated into many languages, have been illustrated by such artists as Gerald Hoffnung, Edward Ardizonne and André François.

The Great Beast

John Symonds

The Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley

Unabridged revised and updated and incorporating *The Magick of Aleister Crowley*

Mayflower

Also by John Symonds
MADAME BLAVATSKY
coming soon from Mayflower Books

Granada Publishing Limited Published in 1973 by Mayflower Books Ltd Frogmore, St Albans, Herts AL2 2NF

First published in Great Britain by Macdonald & Co Ltd 1971 Copyright © John Symonds 1971 Revised by the author 1973 Made and printed in Great Britain by Richard Clay (The Chaucer Press) Ltd Bungay, Suffolk Set in Monotype Times

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

This book is published at a net price and is supplied subject to the Publisher's Association Standard Conditions of Sale registered under the Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1956.

CONTENTS

	D. C.	0
	Preface	9
1	Past Lives	13
2	Father and Son	22
3	The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn	29
4	The Laird of Boleskine	42
5	Against Chogo Ri	62
6	Prince and Princess Chioa Khan	69
7	Aiwass, the Holy Guardian Angel	81
8	Kangchenjunga, the Five Sacred Peaks	87
9	The Walk Across China	108
10	The Star in the West	118
11	The Vision and the Voice	126
12	Ab-ul-Diz	146
13	The High Magick Art	177
14	The Wizard in the Wood	224
15	The Scarlet Woman	254
16	Concubines One and Two	263
17	The Sacred Abbey of Thelema	270
18	The Ipsissimus	290
19	Cakes of Light for Mary Butts	299
20	The Fountain of Hyacinth	315
21	King Lamus of Telepylus	326
22	Frater Aud	333
23	Norman Mudd, a Probationer of the A:.A:.	351
24	In Exile	359
25	The Persecution of the Thelemites	372
26	The Rebirth of Alostrael	389
27	A Nest of Serpents	402
28	The Beast and the Monster	412
29	The Ambivalence of Bertha Busch	426
30	Mr Justice Swift is Surprised	433
31	Magical Retirement	440
) I	Index	459
	mucx .	733

To Kenneth Grant X° O.T.O.

PREFACE

The Great Beast was first published in 1951. The present work is about a third longer and contains relevant chapters from The Magic of Aleister Crowley which appeared in 1958.

In 1951, the then Head of Crowley's magical order, the late Karl Germer, was shocked when he read *The Great Beast*. The Order of Oriental Templars (or Order of the Templars of the East) is a small international body of adepts who practise sexual magic. Germer said that the book would set the order back a thousand years. He was mistaken. There is no doubt that the widespread interest today in Aleister Crowley stems from *The Great Beast*.

Unexpectedly, the tide has turned in Crowley's favour. The doctrine of 'Do What Thou Wilt', with its encouragement to trample the gods under foot and to take one's fill of love, wine, and 'strange drugs', has seized the imagination of this restless world.

Crowley's philosophy, as generally understood, invites one 'to do one's thing'. Crowley did his thing on a scale that makes him supreme in the field. At the turn of the century, he sprang fully armed from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and began to practise the several magical systems with which he was familiar. But the Secret Chiefs or Superhuman Intelligences who rule this planet had designed a far greater role for him than that of an ordinary magician, and in due course they informed him that he was the World Teacher. And Aiwass, one of these Secret Chiefs, made the revelation certain by dictating to Crowley what he considered to be the future bible of mankind. The result was *The Book of the Law*, which supplied Crowley with his magical word, *Thelema*, 'Will', which expands to Do What Thou Wilt.

Crowley compared his word to Buddha's, *Anatta*, 'no-self' (i.e. not individual consciousness but the Universal or Absolute Consciousness), to Mohammed's word, *Allah*, 'God is One', and to Christ's, *Agape*, 'Love'.

After Aiwass had appeared to him and dictated The Book of the Law, he gave up practising ordinary feats of magic, such as

PREFACE

11

making himself invisible, and his main, if not sole, aim in exploring the Astral Plane was to find solutions to riddles contained in *The Book of the Law*.

The newspaper editors who reviled Crowley were unaware of the fact that he was the Logos of the Aeon; they were not even aware that a New Aeon had begun. They weighed the mere man, Aleister Crowley, in the balance of the morality of the Old Aeon of Christianity and found him badly wanting. Only today, a quarter of a century after his death, is his philosophy of Do What Thou Wilt beginning to receive attention. The underground press (*International Times*) has described Crowley as 'the unsung hero of the hippies'.

The New Aeon began in 1904, but before it can get under way, the debris of the Old Aeon has to be dragged clear: civilisation as we know it, and all its values, have to be destroyed, and obliterated as thoroughly as Atlantis. It is a bleak outlook. Crowley compared it to a new Dark Age. *The Book of the Law* contains all the material for building the New Aeon some hundreds of years hence.

Crowley was one of the many who rebelled against the self-righteous, rosy view of society and of man which was held by the Victorians. These were the 'gods' that he trampled under foot to set himself up in their place. The progress he made in this direction was due in part to the fact that he was not afraid of madness; he pressed on into realms that would daunt all but the most courageous or the most foolhardy. From the point of view of the occult sciences, his merit lies in the system of guards (safeguards against obsession) which he devised for protecting the traveller on these secret and dangerous planes. Just before he died in 1947, in the irregular behaviour of his Californian pupils, he caught a glimpse of what was to come; somewhat illogically, he was not pleased.

Crowley was no lover of Samuel Johnson: he could not stand Johnson's imaginative commonsense and his profound faith in the Christian religion. They are at opposite poles or, rather, Johnson is in the centre, Crowley is on the distant periphery, gazing outward into the cold waste.

Material on Crowley's life is extensive though some essential items were here and there missing. I am deeply indebted to Sir Gerald Kelly, PPRA, for supplying most of these missing items.

I am also indebted to Mrs Nora Fitzgerald and Mr Tom Driberg, MP, for the loan of further material. And to Mr Ellic Howe

for helping me to unravel Crowley's relationship with the Golden Dawn.

Obscure points have been elucidated for me or information supplied by Mr Noel Blakiston, the Revd J. Dover Wellman, Commander Charles Drage, Mr Aidan Evans, Mr Peter Fryer, Mr Charles Gray, Mr Francis King, Sir Arnold Lunn, Miss Betty May, Mr James W. Reardon, Mr C. F. Russell, and Mr Charles Nelson Stewart.

And I have been sustained by the kindness of Edward O. Marsh who read the complete typescript and made many valuable suggestions.

Love and do what you will. ST AUGUSTINE

1 PAST LIVES

Who was Aleister Crowley? Crowley himself was by no means sure. He knew that a boy called Edward Alexander ('Alick') was born in 1875 to Edward Crowley, brewer and prominent Plymouth Brother, and that this child grew up to call himself Aleister, and to divide his time between climbing mountains and practising magical rituals. But that child, he felt, was only a part of 'Aleister Crowley' – an insubstantial and merely phenomenal part. On another plane was the real Crowley, more like a god than a man, a superhuman, if you like, filled with lofty thoughts and a careless but kindly attitude towards frail humanity.

He had, of course, lived before and he would live again. He had had many past lives as well as a continuous existence as a Master (called a Hidden Master or Secret Chief) on one of the Higher Planes.

Crowley once offered a glimpse of his life as a Master when he described how he attended a Council of Masters, shortly before the time of Mohammed. The place of meeting was in one of those remote fastnesses in the heart of the mountain-fledged forests of —, in one of the wildest solitudes of Europe. (The exact place is not mentioned.)

The critical questions to be decided at that time – the beginning of the Dark Ages – was the policy to be adopted in order to help humanity. Crowley was always seeking ways and means to help humanity. 'A small minority, including myself,' he wrote, 'was for positive action; definite movements were to be made; in particular, the mysteries were to be revealed. The majority, especially the Asiatic Masters, refused even to discuss the proposal. They contemptuously abstained from voting, as if to say, "Let the youngsters learn their lesson". My party therefore carried the day, and various Masters were appointed to undertake different adventures.'

Crowley's own task was to bring Oriental wisdom to Europe, and to restore paganism in a purer form. He does not make it clear whether this task was given to him in the 6th century AD (Mohammed was born about 570) or in one of his later incarnations. He certainly did his best to restore paganism in his

incarnation of Aleister Crowley as known to the *Sunday Express* and *John Bull*, both of which papers attacked him on that very account.

It is not surprising that Crowley, whose dreams are thronged with kings and popes, should claim Pope Alexander VI as one of his incarnations. This brilliant but pleasure-loving prelate, who was accused of committing murder and incest, was the kind of pope he would have loved to be. One of his treasured possessions was a gold sequin which was struck by Alexander: on one side was his papal and family arms, on the other the Gospel story of the miraculous draught of fishes. Crowley used this coin as his 'disk' (or talisman) in his magical operations for getting gold. His recollection of his life as pope is unfortunately scant, or he was unusually reticent; all he says, in fact, is that he failed in his task of 'crowning the Renaissance through not being wholly purified in my personal character'.

He had several recollections of himself during ancient times. He was, among others, the Theban priest, Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, who flourished during the 26th dynasty (the preface to Crowley's *The Equinox of the Gods* is signed *Ankh-f-n-Khonsu*), and he was also the Chinese sage, Ko Hsuan, a disciple of Lao-tzu, author of *Khing Kang King*, which Crowley turned into rhyme.

The identity of Aleister Crowley is further complicated by his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, who sometimes seems to be more Crowley than Crowley himself. 'My health has been constantly bad – a mixture of swamp fever and rheumatism, fugitive neuralgic symptoms, etc.,' wrote Crowley in May 1917, when he was forty-one. 'But I, myself, Aiwass, have been considering all the time how to act as to Crowley's body and mind. Can I use it any more? Wouldn't my ideas get ahead much faster if he [Crowley] were dead? Shouldn't I be wise to manifest in another, or in a multitude?'

Crowley was at that time in America, and the plaintive note of this extract from his diary was due to America's entry into the world war on the side of the Allies, and the consequent loss of his job of writing propaganda for the Germans. He had backed the side he now knew was going to lose and he feared retribution. It is not surprising that he crept closer to his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, and wished he could slough off Crowley's skin.

The following July he met a woman from Pennsylvania called Anna Katherine Miller, whom he nicknamed 'the Dog', and in August he went to live with her in a room on Central Park West 'where we can see nothing but trees! Glory be to *Otz Chiim* [the Tree of Life] in whose boughs the Wonder Bird, the Swan Paramahamsa [the divine Swan] makes His nest. (I am aware that terrestrial swans don't nest in trees.)' He thought that Anna was the materialisation of a 'Brown Girl' he had seen in a vision.

The following year he was off on a Magical Retirement, paddling a canoe down the Hudson to set up camp on 'Oesopus Island'. It was here on this island that he recalled in a series of trances several of his previous lives.

The trances were peculiarly intense. He used yoga to get into them and his mentioning of 'Samadhi' (supreme ecstacy) reveals that he had attained the highest point of concentration. According to Buddhist teachings, it is the progressive perfection of the spirit through yogic concentration that awakens memories of former incarnations. Crowley sought the aid of cocaine and anhalonium. The trances were said by him to be of a sublimity beyond words. The crown of them was 'an Angelic vision' such as he had never before enjoyed.

The incarnation immediately previous to the Aleister Crowley incarnation was that of Eliphas Lévi. Eliphas Lévi was the name assumed by Alfonse Louis Constant, author of well-known works on magic and the Cabbala.

When we were discussing magic one afternoon at Hastings and I objected that Lévi had died six months before Crowley was born, that is to say Crowley was already a foetus while Lévi was still alive, he replied that this was no contradiction because the spirit of Lévi would not have descended into the womb of Crowley's mother until she was three months pregnant.

If one believes that Crowley was Lévi reincarnated a great deal in Crowley's character is explained, but his 'magical memory' revealed nothing about Eliphas Lévi which could not be obtained by reading Arthur Edward Waite's translation of Lévi's *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, 1896, and especially its biographical preface.

In his trance Crowley descended into Lévi's life after returning first to his own infancy, birth, and pre-natal state; he asserted that he found Lévi on the point of death. (A photograph of Lévi lying dead in a brass bedstead with a large crucifix placed on top of the bedclothes was reproduced in Lévi's *The History of Magic*, 1913.) Crowley goes on to say, 'I went through quite a number of scenes in Lévi's life, most unimportant though I remember several

episodes with my wife and the scenes of my taking various orders in Catholicism.'

Next, he remembered a little country church with a square tower . . . a lot of broad, dusty roads. The scene reminded him of the south of France, and the name Arles appeared. He recalled a keen sense of social inferiority, no doubt because of Lévi's humble birth which, Crowley thought, explained Lévi's socialist views. 'I recall, too, a long walk I took when I was seventeen or so, in open country, north France somewhere, I think, and my aspirations culminating in a magical oath.'

Crowley's magical memory did not reveal as much about Lévi as Lévi himself revealed. Lévi tells us that in the spring of 1854, he came to England to seek a new current and to devote himself, without interruption, to his researches which he called by the name of science. He had several letters of introduction to eminent persons who were interested, he was told, in the supernatural. But when he met them he found to his disappointment that, although they were very courteous, their interest in the subject was either sensational or trivial. They expected him to perform miracles, 'as if I were a charlatan,' writes Lévi with indignation. He was disgusted by such crudities. Even if he had wanted to achieve some of the more startling results of ceremonial magic, whose wearisome nature repelled him, he could not do so without expensive and rare equipment.

Returning one afternoon to his hotel, Lévi found that someone had called and left him a note. With it was a card or, rather, half a card, cut diagonally, on which, Lévi immediately recognized, was half the Seal of Solomon, the six-pointed star of magic. The note read: 'Tomorrow, at three o'clock, in front of Westminster Abbey, the second half of the card will be given to you.'

At three o'clock the following day, Lévi was nervously pacing up and down before the front entrance to the Abbey. Suddenly a carriage drew up and a footman approached the French magus, made a sign to him, then opened the carriage door for him to get inside. He did so. The carriage moved off.

He found himself sitting beside a lady in black, heavily veiled. She presented him with the other half of the card, so that the Seal of Solomon was complete. Then she lifted her thick yeil.

I feel sorry to have to tell those of my readers who are romantically inclined that this mysterious stranger, who spoke to Lévi in French with a strong English accent, was not young and beautiful. She was, alas, elderly, her eyebrows quite grey, though her eyes

were black and of unusual brilliance. She mentioned the novelist, Bulwer Lytton, whom Lévi had met. In fact, Lévi's disgust with English society had arisen mainly from the people he had met at Knebworth House in Hertfordshire, where Lord Lytton, friend of the celebrated spiritualist and levitationist, Daniel Dunglas Home, had organised a club for magical experiments. As the carriage rolled on to the house of the lady with the grey eyebrows, she said that one of Bulwer Lytton's friends had told her of his, Lévi's, refusal to demonstrate his magical abilities to satisfy their curiosity. She added that she had a collection of magical vestments and weapons which she would very much like to show him, if he would swear not to reveal her identity. If he declined to swear then, alas, she must drive him back to his hotel. Lévi swore not to tell a soul.

It was through this unknown Englishwoman that the greatest of the French magi of the 19th century performed his celebrated evocation of Apollonius of Tyana, author of the *Nuctemeron*.² The ceremony took place, after a period of preparation which lasted twenty-one days, in a turret of the lady's house, a small room whose walls were covered with concave mirrors. Facing east was an altar with the pentagram cut into the white marble top; the pentagram was also painted in several colours on a white lambskin stretched out below. Lévi put on a loose white garment reaching to his feet (not unlike the robe he used to wear as a Catholic priest), placed a crown of vervain leaves, entwined with a gold chain, on his head; in one hand he grasped a sword, in the other, he held the text of the ritual. A brazier burning charcoal of alder and laurel wood completed the equipment.

The magician began to chant the evocation in a low voice which rose slowly.

At the end of the ceremony he was not absolutely certain that it was the divine Apollonius that he had conjured up. He describes the ancient Greek image as a man completely wrapped in a shroud, but the face of Apollonius must have appeared through the shroud, for Lévi describes it as lean, melancholy and beardless, a description which in no way corresponds to the bearded,

2 'A night and a day' or light issuing from darkness or the light of occultism.

¹ Crowley, reliving his life as Lévi, recalled 'very clearly' the famous author of *Zanoni*, but omitted to give any details about Lytton or even to describe his appearance.

PAST LIVES

handsome, broad-browed Greek bust of Apollonius. The apparition did not speak directly to Lévi, but touched his hand and his arm, both of which immediately became numb, and remained so for several days.

The lady in whose house this singular ceremony was performed was a high initiate, but her connection with the French magus did not last long. Lévi, true to his oath, does not reveal her identity but he gives a summary of her character. 'I have no doubt,' he says, 'that she was addicted to necromancy and goetia [black magic]. At times she lost all self-control; at other times she yielded to meaningless fits of passion for which it was difficult to discover a cause. I left London without bidding her adieu.'

But Crowley, who was under no such oath of silence, tells us that according to his magical memory 'she was a countess, or something similar, and a veritable hag of Satan, the kind of lady who would poison people out of petty spite. She was in actual fact a murderess.'

A fortnight later, Crowley in another reminiscent trance on Oesopus Island, watched the life of Cagliostro pass in dumb show before his impassioned gaze.

Crowley's magical memory of himself as Giuseppe Balsamo, better known as Count Cagliostro, the 18th-century Sicilian adventurer and mage, is even less convincing, as most of the details are at variance with the known facts of Cagliostro's life. Established fact tells us that he died at the hands of the Inquisition in the impregnable fortress of San Leo, near Montefeltro, but Crowley saw him die in 'some mountain woodland' while on a journey accompanied by a peasant boy in gay clothes.

The account of his birth in Tunis instead of Palermo is another error on the part of Crowley's magical memory.

As Cagliostro, I was born in a brothel, kept by my mother's mother. My mother was half-Arab, my father presumably some rich traveller. It was a gorgeous brothel. It was because of my birth that my mother was married off to the fisherman person. There is a profound horror and gloom antecedent to this birth; at present it merely darkens as I seek to penetrate it.

Crowley's incarnation before Cagliostro was an obscure and nameless individual, no doubt in consequence of some serious magical error. He was a dark, pallid, pimply youth with hollow, purple-ringed eyes, a head too big for his body, and a haunted look. The life of this melancholy youth was brief: he hanged him-

self at the age of twenty-six or -eight. No reason for this is given by Crowley but a bad relationship with his mother is suggested by the description of her as severe and authoritative. She was Dutch, German, or German-Swiss; Crowley was not quite sure.

The next day, 25 August 1918, at 5.10 pm, another trance brought Crowley face to face with the incarnation of Heinrich van Dorn, a fellow with a little more dash. Crowley seems to have been shocked by his life, which he describes as futile and very black-magical; it was a tale of grimoires and futile evil rites, of pacts mocked by Satan, and crimes unworthy even of witches.

The same trance carried him on to the incarnation before that. It began with the death of a 45-year-old Russian whose name was given as Father Ivan, and who was the librarian in a vast castle belonging to military monks.

The castle, hidden in a thickly forested plain surrounded by high mountains, seemed to Crowley to be in South Poland or the Balkans. What is certain, however, is that Father Ivan was of noble birth and had been educated in Germany. In appearance, he was nondescript: a round face – pyknosomatic type – grey eyes, ashen hair and moustache, pale skin, small, even teeth. But his character was remarkable. Through his proficiency in magic – he was a very full Major Adept – he had all the monks under his thumb; he led them in political intrigues and controlled their secret service.

Before joining the monks, he took part in a religious war, magic, of course, being his chief interest. He had found a useful assistant in a Hungarian witch who lived in the forest; in one magical working there had been werewolves and vampires, and a human sacrifice. Later the witch had been caught by infuriated peasants and burnt alive.

Father Ivan was a double personality. On the one hand he was suave and genial; on the other he was subject to fits of violent temper – once in a fit of rage he killed his favourite page, Stephen Otto, with a riding whip. In his youth he was a great duellist, had a famous prostitute as his mistress, and would frequently fight to defend her reputation. All this brought him into trouble with the university authorities, but he escaped expulsion by defending himself so ably in Greek that everyone was enchanted.

The mistress Crowley described in detail: she had two moles on her face, a deep scar under her left eye, a long, aquiline nose, a large, thin mouth, and a deep, red flush. (This, it should be noted, was Crowley's archetype of beauty, the perfect Scarlet Woman;

it is not surprising that the lady attracted Father Ivan.) She was a good singer and played the mandola, the krumhorn, and the citole. While she was the young Ivan's mistress, she was being kept by an old, fat burgomaster. She used to hide Ivan in her room so that he might watch the physical and mental cruelties she practised on the burgomaster.

There was another student in the town – it was presumably Heidelberg – who was Ivan's rival for this courtesan's favours, but he, in a fit of pique, killed himself. In the scandal which followed, she was thrown out of town.

Crowley remembered her window, hung with red flowers, in a narrow street; it was, he said, as clear as if it had happened yesterday, especially the view of her leaning out with naked breasts, her white teeth gleaming as she called him. Through her, he met 'the wicked Bishop', a mysterious person who used to ride masked into the town. This Bishop began to talk magic with Ivan but unfortunately was murdered soon afterwards; it transpired that he was a special envoy of the Pope.

The incarnation before Father Ivan was that of a rich, well-born youth, more girl than boy, a hermaphrodite dreadfully ill-formed. Crowley clearly recalled his dark blue velvet breeches, lace cape and feathered hat. He was small, thin, tubercular, with a shock of fawn hair and a curvature of the spine. He had a fierce temper and was a hater of mankind. 'I died of syphilis contracted from a German Ritter who raped me,' wrote Crowley as he said farewell.

There were other incarnations, notably that of Sir Edward Kelley, a medium with cropped ears who saw and heard angels for the learned Dr John Dee. The adventurous nature and dubious reputation of Kelley made Crowley prefer him to Dee, the scholar; they were contemporaries, so he had to settle for one or the other.

Crowley's past lives recede in a series of mysterious figures, as vague as the incarnation of Aleister Crowley which lasted from 1875 to 1947. Judging from a letter he wrote in the last year of his life to Jacintha Buddicom, he was aware of the kaleidoscopic nature of his character.

I had at that time a little rose and cross – five rubies and a fivepetal rose with a cross of six squares with various inscriptions, and I arranged with myself that when I put this on I should act in one character, and when I took it off again in another. This was a great help to me in sorting out the various elements of my being. It was not a matter of the magical personality so much, I simply built up two people of entirely different characteristics. One, for example, might be a scholar, a mountaineer, and explorer – a person of great athletic achievements, generous in disposition, noble, and so on. The other character had a whole lot of other characteristics, very distinct from those of the first, and I used to punish myself if, when I was one character, I performed any action which was suited only to the other.

2 FATHER AND SON

In his autobiography, 1 Crowley tells us that his ancestors on his father's side were Celts, and that the Crowley from whom he traced his descent came to England in Tudor times. He claimed kinship with the 16th-century poet and preacher, Robert Crowley, on no greater evidence, it seems, than the same name. His brief account of his ancestry begins with the noble Breton family, de Quérouaille, and leaps straight to his father, Edward Crowley (whom he called an engineer), picking Robert Crowley up on the

If Crowley's father was indeed an engineer, he probably invented the beer-engine mentioned by Yates in Edmund Yates: His Recollections and Experiences, 1884; for although Crowley never admitted it, his family were the brewers of that name. 'In those days, too,' wrote Edmund Yates, 'we used to lunch at places which seem to have entirely disappeared. The "Crowley's Alton Alehouse" is not so frequently met with as it was thirty years ago. The "alehouses" were, in fact, small shops fitted with a beerengine and a counter; they had been established by Mr Crowley, a brewer of Alton, on finding the difficulty of procuring ordinary public-houses for the sale of his beer; and at them nothing was sold but beer, ham sandwiches, bread and cheese, but all of the very best. They were exceedingly popular with young men who did not particularly care about hanging round the bars of tayerns. and did an enormous trade.'

Crowley's ancestors were not, as he would have us believe, of the same family as that of Louise de Kéroualle. Duchess of Portsmouth: his descent was only from a 'beer baron' who established in the 1850s alehouses and city clerks' lunching places. He was born in Leamington, Warwickshire, on 12 October 1875 (the year the Theosophical Society was founded in New York by Madame

Blavatsky and her companion, Colonel Olcott), and was christened Edward Alexander - the name Aleister was not assumed until he decided at the age of about twenty that he did not like Edward Alexander. The important fact about his background is that his parents, like the parents of Edmund Gosse, were Plymouth Brethren, a sect which was founded in Dublin about 1830 by an Irish clergyman called Darby, and which achieved its greatest success in Plymouth.

Aleister tells us that his father travelled about the countryside, preaching that true Christianity could be found only among the Plymouth Brethren, that he would evangelise on foot the villages of Warwickshire (and later of Surrey), and that Aleister would

frequently be taken with him.

After breakfast each morning the Crowley household, including the servants, would gather in the dining-room to read aloud a chapter of the Bible, each person taking a verse. From the age of four, Aleister also took part; in this way he learned about the end of the world, salvation through the Plymouth Brethren, the horrible nature of sin, and about death, a subject which was Edward Crowley's obsession.

Although Aleister thought he had nothing, or little, in common with his parents, his life was not unlike that of his father. Both men belonged to a small sect of the elect, tried to convert the world to their point of view, and lived amid the mysteries of religion. The young Crowley began, at any rate, by identifying himself with his father. He also became a Plymouth Brother; Plymouthism was the only true faith; he could not even conceive the existence of people who might be so foolish or so wicked as to doubt it. In his childish ardour, he thought of himself as a Christian knight, doing deeds of holiness and valour; he wanted to excel himself for Christ, as he excelled himself, when he grew up, for Ra-Hoor-Khuit, the Egyptian god of war, in the religion of his own making.

As he grew older, he found that any description of torture or blood aroused his feelings tremendously. He even liked to imagine himself in agony and, in particular, degraded by, and suffering at, the hands of a woman whom he described as 'wicked, independent, courageous, ambitious'.

He never outgrew these fantasies of being hurt, and especially of being degraded by a woman of a certain type. They were, he explained, connected with 'the hermaphroditism in my physical structure', but there was in fact no hermaphroditism in his

¹ The Spirit of Solitude, An Autohagiography, Subsequently re-Antichristened The Confessions of Aleister Crowley, Mandrake Press, 1930. Two volumes only of the projected six volumes were published. In 1969, all six volumes in one were published by Jonathan Cape, London: and in 1970 by Hill and Wang, New York.

physical structure; he was only bisexual in his outlook and sought sexual congress with men as well as women.

Crowley was fascinated by the prophetic passages of the Bible, especially those in *Revelation*. He fell in love with the False Prophet, the Beast, the Scarlet Woman. Then one day he discovered that his sympathies were entirely on the side of the enemies of heaven. There is nothing unusual in this discovery, what was unusual was the manner in which Crowley reacted to it. In his revolt against his parents and against God, he set himself up in God's place. It was not a temporary attitude, it stayed with him and set the whole course of his life.

He left an incomplete and contradictory picture of his child-hood. He was unhappy, but not entirely so, at home and at school. He hated, and was physically repelled by, his mother, but in his first attempt at autobiography, the preface to *The World's Tragedy* entitled 'A Boyhood in Hell', he unexpectedly throws her a morsel of praise. The Crowley household was not exactly a gay one. Christmas, for example, was banned as a pagan festival – and Aleister was given no toys, for that was contrary to the precepts of Plymouthism – but he seems, nevertheless, to have had his fun. In fact, from his account of his childhood, his parents appear to have been not unkindly middle-class people, though with no 'understanding' of children in the modern sense of the word.

When he was eleven, his father died of cancer of the tongue. Aleister had some respect but little love for him. With insight he pointed out that from the moment of the funeral he entered a new phase of development, the main feature of which was rebelliousness.

He was sent first to a school for the sons of Plymouth Brethren (at which the main instrument of instruction was the Bible, and the sole instrument of correction the birch), where he was accused, at the age of twelve, of attempting to corrupt another boy. Later he went to Malvern and Tonbridge, both of which schools he hated. He was also at one time under instruction from a tutor who, between lessons, introduced him to racing, billiards, betting, cards, and women, for which keenness in enlightenment his pupil offered him a word of gratitude in his autobiography.

'They sent me to Tonbridge; my health broke down; partly, one may say, through what would have been my own fault or misfortune if I had been properly educated; but in fact it was the direct result of the vile system which, not content with torturing

me itself, handed me over bound and blindfold to the outraged majesty of Nature.' A note in Crowley's writing in the margin of his own copy of *The World's Tragedy*, where this passage occurs, penetrates this mystery. 'I caught the clap from a prostitute in Glasgow.'

He tells a number of anecdotes about his early years which are similar to those told by most boys, except perhaps one about a cat which indicates, to my mind, that he was lacking in imagination. I mean by this that he could never imagine a situation fully, he had always to act it out. Throughout his life, he kept hurling himself into adventures, especially with women, for precisely that reason. Imagination presupposes restraint upon action. If you act out all your instincts and impulses, you do not need an imaginary inner life, for you get it all in reality. The lack of effective imagination may explain the extravagant nature of Aleister Crowley's life on the one hand, and his failure as a poet on the other.

Crowley had been told that a cat has nine lives and deduced that it must be practically impossible to kill one.

I caught a cat, and having administered a large dose of arsenic, I chloroformed it, hanged it above the gas jet, stabbed it, cut its throat, smashed its skull, and, when it had been pretty thoroughly burnt, drowned it and threw it out of the window that the fall might remove the ninth life. The operation was successful. I was genuinely sorry for the animal; I simply forced myself to carry out the experiment in the interests of pure science.

In 1895, at the age of twenty, Crowley went up to Trinity College, Cambridge. He had entered for the Moral Science Tripos but he found himself repelled by political economy which was one of his subjects. He says nothing of the other subjects of his course, only that for one day of those three years he worked on a Greek play. He spent most of his time reading and writing poetry.

During the vacation, he travelled abroad, wandered solitarily through Europe – to St Petersburg with the vague intention of learning Russian as a means of entering the Diplomatic Service; to Switzerland to climb the Alps. His happiest moments were when he was alone on mountains and the conquest of a peak gave him a sense of power. In 1894 he made climbs on the cliffs at Beachy Head, and corresponded about them with the famous

climber, A. F. Mummery. Every year from 1894 to 1898, he went to the Alps. According to his own testimony and that of T. S. Blakeney, his best year was 1895; he claimed the Eiger (a solitary ascent), Eigerjoch, Jungfraujoch, Mönch (traversed from Wengen), Jungfrau from the Rottalsattel, Wetterlücke, Mönchjoch, Beichgrat, Petersgrat, and the Tschingelhorn. He was regarded, says Blakeney, as a promising climber, although somewhat erratic; Norman Collie, Maylard, Solly, H. V. Read, Eckenstein, Larden and others testified to his capacity as a climber, especially on rock, 'and only Larden was disposed to regard him as reckless' ³

On the last day of the year 1896, while he was asleep in a hotel in Stockholm, he was awakened 'to the knowledge that I possessed a magical means of becoming conscious and of satisfying a part of my nature which had up to that moment concealed itself from me'. This is not clear, but it means, I think, that he had had an illumination that he could control reality by magical thinking. He went on to say that it was also a horrible and painful experience, 'combined with a certain ghostly terror'. At the same time it was 'the key to the purest and holiest spiritual ecstasy'.

In the preface to a long poem which he wrote two years later, he expressed a similar complex of ideas and feelings.

It was a windy night, that memorable seventh night of December, when this philosophy was born in me. How the grave old professor wondered at my ravings! I had called at his house, for he was a valued friend of mine, and I felt strange thoughts and emotions shake within me. Ah! how I raved! I called to him to trample me, he would not. We passed together into the stormy night. I was on horseback, how I galloped round him in my phrenzy, till he became the prey of real physical fear! How I shrieked out I know not what strange words! And the poor old man tried all he could do to calm me; he thought I was mad! The fool! I was in the death struggle with self; God and Satan fought for my soul those three long hours. God conquered now I have only one doubt left – which of the twain was God?

A Cambridge bookseller issued the poem in a white paper cover; it bore upon its title page:

1 See The Confessions.
3 Blakeney, op cit.

2 The Alpine Journal, May 1952.

ACELDAMA

A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS IN

by a gentleman of the University of Cambridge

privately printed 1898

The pseudonym was borrowed from Shelley whose *The Necessity of Atheism*, 1811, was by a 'Gentleman of the University of Oxford'. And by now he had decided to call himself Aleister Crowley, after having read, as he says, in some book that the most propitious name for becoming famous with is one consisting of a dactyl followed by a spondee, such as Jē-rě-mỹ Taỹ-lŏr. Aĩ-eĭs-těr Crōw-lěy fulfilled these conditions, Aleister (properly Alistair) being the Gaelic form of Alexander.

He had been writing poetry since the age of ten. Now, at twentytwo he felt sufficiently sure of his talent to announce it to the world in one hundred copies.

Here is a stanza which reveals not so much the emotional confusion of a young man, as the presentiment of a peculiar taste which was to remain with him throughout his life.

All degradation, all sheer infamy,
Thou shalt endure. Thy head beneath the mire
And dung of worthless women shall desire
As in some hateful dream, at last to lie;
Woman must trample thee till thou respire that
deadliest fume;
The vilest worms must crawl, the loathliest

The vilest worms must crawl, the loathlies vampires gloom.

Aceldama can be dismissed as a not very successful attempt to transplant Baudelaire's satanism to England, a task which beat Swinburne. It was read by some of the other gentlemen of the University of Cambridge but did not arouse much interest. The one review it gathered found it lacking in the virtues that Victorian England expected from its poets and advised against its being shown to the young.

1 He meant trochee.

The poem appeared during his last term at Trinity. He had done little work during his three years there, but the time had not been wasted for he had discovered what he wanted to be – an Adept in the Secret Arts, a Magus. Only magic could guarantee immortality and by magic he meant the art which controls the secret forces of nature. He had thus found, to use the term which was on his lips throughout his life, his True Will.

What was the good, he argued, of becoming a diplomat? He would soon be forgotten. Say he were made Ambassador to France. Who could remember the man who had filled that post a hundred years ago? It had been his ambition to be a great poet, but poetry is really no better. Aeschylus proved his point. Even in Cambridge, cradle of poets, Aeschylus was a mere name to all but a tiny fraction of the three thousand men in residence. 'I must find,' said Crowley, 'a material in which to work which is immune from the forces of change.'

No picture of a man is complete without a sketch at least of his mother. From her photograph, Emily Bertha Crowley, 'of a Devon and Somerset family,' can be said to have been a plain-looking woman; from her son's account, she was also unsympathetic. She tried to turn her son into a religious prig, and in return he presented her to the readers of his autobiography as 'a brainless bigot of the most narrow, logical and inhuman type'.

He seems to have treated both his mother and her religion with churlish scorn. She reacted by calling him 'the beast', meaning that his blasphemous behaviour reminded her of the beast of *Revelation*: 'And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems . . . And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God.' It is not clear whether she intended this view of her son to be taken literally or figuratively, but Aleister, who had decided to set himself up in God's place, accepted it in its literal sense – he believed himself to be the Beast.

What follows in this book will try to show the extent to which Crowley carried this belief.

3 THE HERMETIC ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN

In the summer of 1898 and 1899, Crowley was again climbing in Switzerland. Tom George Longstaff, President of the Alpine Club from 1947 to 1949, met him there in 1899, and has left us this testimony of Crowley's ability as a mountaineer. '... he was a fine climber, if an unconventional one. I have seen him go up the dangerous and difficult right (true) side of the great ice fall of the Mer de Glace below the Géant alone, just for a promenade. Probably the first and perhaps the only time this mad, dangerous, and difficult route had been taken.'1

He had quickly followed up *Aceldama* with other works of verse: *The Tale of Archais, Songs of the Spirit, The Poem, Jezebel, Jephthah*, and *White Stains* (which was issued clandestinely by Leonard Smithers²) were all published in the same year as *Aceldama*. He had a private fortune and, as the Cambridge publisher of *Aceldama* had shown him, he could print his own poems at his own expense as fast as he was able to write them.

Those who have read Crowley's poetry, and are competent to judge, either place him among the minor poets of the time or, like Mario Praz, ³ eject him from Parnassus altogether. He lacked the imagination or the maturity of mind to be a good, let alone a great, poet. Nevertheless some of his verse is quite effective, one example being the untitled poem that he composed during 1924 on the banks of the Marne (see page 380). In his early years, he rushed everything round to the printer before he had had time to consider it, and the result is a mass of verse, clearly expressed, but rather a bore to read.

1 This My Voyage, 1950.

2 Smithers was the leading English pornographic publisher of the time. He issued Aubrey Beardsley's *The Story of Venus and Tannhäuser*, a 3-volumed fantasy on the theme of masochism, *Gynecocracy* (attributed to Havelock Ellis but most probably by a lawyer called Stanislas de Rodés), and other erotic works. He was also the publisher of Oscar Wilde (his last three books), Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, and Max Beerbohm. *White Stains* is now available (Duckworth, 1973).

3 The Romantic Agony, 1933.

White Stains is ascribed to George Archibald Bishop, 'a Neuropath of the Second Empire'. (Tom Bond Bishop was his pious Plymouth Brother uncle who stood in *loco parentis* to him after his father's death, and of whom he said in his autobiography, 'No more cruel fanatic, no meaner villain, ever walked this earth'.)

In Crowley's writings there is usually a tone of mockery, and many of his opinions are either cruel or plain preposterous – such. for instance, as his identification of Jack the Ripper¹ or his assertion, in his Confessions, that White Stains is proof of his 'praeterhuman innocence'. White Stains is, in fact, a collection of pornographic verse which Mr Peter Fryer, an authority on erotica, considers the filthiest in the English language. Most of the poems are in imitation of Baudelaire's Spleen (but not his Idéal) as some of the titles indicate - 'Volupté', 'La Juive', 'Necrophilia', 'With Dog and Dame', the last, a poem on a theme of bestiality. The work is prefaced by the statement 'The Editor hopes that Mental Pathologists, for whose eyes alone this treatise is destined will spare no precautions to prevent it falling into other hands'. This is, of course, an example of Crowley's humour. On the other hand he was at least half serious when he advanced the view that White Stains rebuts the opinions of Krafft-Ebing, compiler of the wellknown work on sexual perversions and anomalies, Psychopathia Sexualis. Crowley's thesis is that sexual aberrations are not, as the German author solemnly affirmed, the result of illness or faute de mieux, but merely 'magical affirmations of perfectly intelligible points of view'. In other words they are acts of sexual magic, the magic which was to become the heart of Crowley's magical practice. 'I did not agree,' he wrote.

I thought that I was able to understand the psychology involved; I said to myself that I must confute the professor. I could only do this by employing the one form at my disposal: the artistic form. I therefore invented a poet who went wrong, who began with normal and innocent enthusiasms, and gradually developed various vices. He ends by being stricken with disease and madness, culminating in murder. In his poems he describes his downfall, always explaining the psychology of each act. The conclusion of the book might therefore be approved in any Sunday School.

1 'It is hardly one's first, or even one's hundredth guess, that the Victorian owrthy in the case of Jack the Ripper was no less a person than Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.' (From an unpublished and untitled essay).

In Zermatt during 1898, he met an Englishman called Julian L. Baker, to whom he expounded the principles of alchemy. Baker happened to be a chemist, and during the walk back to their hotel, he took the young alchemist to task. Aleister, floundering amid the mysteries, was impressed. He had, earlier, sent out an appeal for a Master. Was Mr Baker this Master perhaps? And he began to tell Baker of this search for the Secret Sanctuary of the Saints, about which he had read in Eckhartshausen's *The Cloud upon the Sanctuary*. Behind the exterior church is an interior church, a Secret Sanctuary in which all the mysteries of God and Nature are contained. Baker was convinced of the young man's earnestness, and confessed that, although not a master himself, he could introduce him to one who was.

He kept his word. When they had returned to London he introduced Aleister to a young man called George Cecil Jones, also a chemist, who was a member of a magical society called the Golden Dawn. And Jones introduced Crowley to this society and to its leader, Samuel Liddell Mathers, who had spent years in libraries in London and Paris, restoring from the various manuscript versions, that oldest and most famous of works on magic, The Key of Solomon, a translation of which he published in 1889. In gratitude to Baker for providing the link, Crowley dedicated to him the book he was writing at the time – Songs of the Spirit.

Half a century later, Jones told me that the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was a 'club' like any other club, a place to pass the time in and meet one's friends. Although founded within living memory, its origin is obscure. According to W. B. Yeats, it was an offshoot of another society called the Hermetic Students. The origin of the Hermetic Students is legendary: an unknown Master, a figure as mysterious as Count Saint-Germain, is said to have come to Mathers one day and instructed him in the mysteries. These instructions, together with Mathers's visions, formed the spiritual basis of the Hermetic Students. Yeats, who was a prominent member of the Golden Dawn, tried to discover the identity of this unknown Master, but neither Mathers nor his artist wife, Moina, knew, or if they did, they would not tell.

Another account of the origin of the Golden Dawn is the one generally accepted. During the 1880s the Revd Alphonsus Woodford, a writer on Masonic subjects, came into possession of a manuscript written in ciphers. Where he got it from, we do not know; it was said that someone found it in that bibliophile's

hunting-ground, Farringdon Road, London, but there is no evidence for this. Unable to penetrate it, Woodford gave it in August 1887 to his friend, Dr William Wynn Westcott, a prominent member of the masonic *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*. After a fortnight's work on the manuscript, Westcott revealed fragmentary magical rituals written in an artificial alphabet, one used by 16th-century alchemists. 'I would call them pseudo-masonic rituals with a mildly magical flavour,' said Mr Ellic Howe who has a xerox copy of a late transcript of the original work. In addition, there was a note saying that if more information was required, it could be obtained from a certain Fräulein Anna Sprengel, whose address in Nüremberg was given.

Of course, Westcott wanted to know more, so in October 1887, he wrote to Fräulein Sprengel. In November she replied, and an eager correspondence sprang up between them. Fräulein Sprengel turned out to be a Rosicrucian Adept, head of the Lichte Liebe Leben Tempel in Nüremberg. The upshot of this correspondence was that she gave Westcott a charter to establish a similar order in Britain. Thus was founded, in the autumn of 1887, the Isis-Urania Temple of the Hermetic Students of the Golden Dawn, with Westcott, Mathers and a Dr William Robert Woodman as its leaders. The charter from Nüremberg did not arrive until 1 March 1888 and as by an unfortunate oversight Anna Sprengel had omitted to sign it, Westcott did so in her name, using her magical motto – Sapiens Dominabitur Astris, 'the Wise Man will Rule the Stars'.

The fragmentary rituals of the cipher manuscript were completed and expanded by Mathers.

About 1891, Anna Sprengel died and Westcott's next letter to her was answered by one of her colleagues who rather ungraciously said that England could expect no further help from the German lodges, and that enough knowledge had been given to Messrs Woodman, Westcott, and Mathers already, and if they wanted more knowledge, they knew perfectly well how to get it. In plain English, they should be able to establish their own magical link with the Secret Chiefs.

What does this mean? The Secret Chiefs are Masters who watch over the affairs of men from their caves in Tibet or, in so far as they are spirit, from the empyrean. The concept of Secret Chiefs or Mahatmas is of ancient Indian tradition. In recent times it was popularised under the name of Hidden Masters by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society. These Hidden

Masters (two of them are called Koot-Hoomi and Morya) are at the centre of her doctrine. But whoever and wherever they were, they did not, as we shall see, confine their appearance to Madame Blavatsky.

The Golden Dawn, in common with other Rosicrucian and Masonic societies, had its members arranged in a hierarchy of office. As one increased in wisdom and purity, so one ascended the scale. One began as a Neophyte $0^{\circ} = 0^{\circ}$, then went on to Zelator $1^{\circ} = 10^{\circ}$, Theoricus $2^{\circ} = 9^{\circ}$, Practicus $3^{\circ} = 8^{\circ}$, Philosophus $4^{\circ} = 7^{\circ}$. These grades were of the First or Outer Order, the Golden Dawn Order, the members of which practised esoteric ceremonies, but did no real magical work. Magic was only learned and practised by members of the Second Order, the Order of the Rosy Cross, the grades of which were Adeptus Minor $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$, Adeptus Major $6^{\circ} = 5^{\circ}$, and Adeptus Exemptus $7^{\circ} = 4^{\circ}$. But this Second Order could not be created until contact was made with the Secret Chiefs.

The Golden Dawn flourished. Soon there were about a hundred members, but without contact with the Secret Chiefs (who alone could advance the affairs of the Order) dissatisfaction grew.

Through his wife, who was clairvoyante, Mathers was allegedly in touch with his superiors, the Secret Chiefs. And one night in 1891, he met three of them in the Bois de Boulogne; he returned in triumph to London, and confronted his two colleagues, Woodman and Westcott, and informed them that the Secret Chiefs had confirmed him in the supreme and sole authority as the Visible Head of the Order.

We do not know what Woodman and Westcott thought of this startling announcement, but in December of the same year Dr Woodman died, and in 1897 Dr Westcott resigned from the Order. Westcott was an East London coroner. The immediate cause of his resignation was that the legal authorities, learning of his connection with a magical society, had warned him that such activities were incompatible with his position.

Mathers was a capable organiser but a very difficult man to get on with. He was an expert on military matters as well as on magic,

1 Out of the Isis-Urania Temple, which worked its rituals at Mark Mason's Hall in Great Queen Street, London, WC2, other Temples grew – the Osiris at Weston-super-Mare, the Horus at Bradford, the Amen-Ra at Edinburgh, the Ahathoor in Paris (established in 1894). In 1900, the Second Order alone had about sixty members, and the number was certainly larger in the First Order.

and he behaved like a general. He wanted Staff Officers, not colleagues. 'I know you mean well,' he wrote in 1897 to Frederick Leigh Gardner, Frater De Profundis ad Lucem, 'but I utterly refuse to concede to you the right to judge my action in ruling the Order.'

There are striking points of resemblance between Mathers and Crowley. They were both men of athletic physique, fascinated by high titles, gazing intently into dark regions of the mind in search of hidden truths, and believing that there was no part of themselves which was not of the gods. Their dress, speech, and daily behaviour merged with their dreams. After Mathers' death in 1918, Crowley begrudgingly praised him. But Mathers was Crowley's prototype of the magician, and much of Crowley's activities, which have the marks of originality, were plain copies of the older man's inventiveness.

Swept up by the Celtic Movement, the Head of the Golden Dawn called himself MacGregor Mathers, Comte de Glenstrae, a scion of the noble MacGregor family, just as Crowley, at a later date, dubbed himself the Laird of Boleskine and Abertarff for no greater reason than that he had a one-storeyed house of that name on the shore of Loch Ness. Later, Mathers transposed his adopted and real names to become Mathers MacGregor, then, after he had gone to live in Paris, to the Chevalier MacGregor. Nightly he changed into Highland dress and danced the sword dance with a knife (*skean-dhu*) in his stocking, a remarkable performance for the son of a merchant's clerk, an Englishman who never set foot in Scotland until the spring of 1897, when he inspected the Amen-Ra Temple in Edinburgh and caught a cold.

Such pretences aroused Crowley's scorn, and in the interests of truth he wrote of Mathers as 'a Hampshire man named Mathers who inexplicably claimed to be MacGregor of Glenstrae'.

It is a pity that no one has written the biography of Mathers. His life was full of magic and madness. 'It was through him mainly', wrote Yeats, 'that I began certain studies and experiences that were to convince me that images well up before the mind's eyes from a deeper source than conscious or subconscious memory.'

Yeats also said of Mathers that he thought him half lunatic, half knave.

In spite of its high-sounding title, the members of the Second Order met in uninspiring rooms at 26 Oakley Square near Euston Station (1894–6), at 36 Blythe Road, Hammersmith (1896–1901), and at Mark Mason's Hall in Great Queen Street in the central

area of London for Outer Order ceremonies. Membership fee for the Outer Order was ten shillings a year. Crowley described his first meeting with his magical colleagues, among whom was Florence Farr, the actress, and Arthur Machen, the novelist, as a bit of a shock – it was such an assemblage of nonentities. Nevertheless, he entered into the Order and accepted all the vows and obligations on 18 November 1898.

He was waiting within the portal under the care of a sentinel while the Hierophant, between the pillars and before the altar, addressed his chief officers and the assembled members. Crowley was clothed in a strange, feminine type of robe with a hood over his head so that he could not see a thing (for the light of the natural world is but darkness compared with the radiance of Divine Light) and he was held by a triple cord, token of nature's the which bound him. A voice from within the Hall of Neophytes cried: 'Child of Earth! arise and enter into the Path of Darkness!'

Another voice, disputing, barring his entrance: 'Child of Earth! unpurified and unconsecrated! Thou canst not enter our Sacred Hall.'

Water and fire then purified and consecrated him.

The Hierophant spoke again, as a god before the assembly of gods. 'Child of Earth, wherefore hast thou come to request admission to this Order?'

A voice answered for him. 'My soul is wandering in the Darkness, seeking for the light of Occult Knowledge, and I believe that in this Order the Knowledge of that Light may be obtained.'

'Are you willing,' asked the Hierophant, 'in the presence of this assembly, to take a great and solemn obligation to keep inviolate the secrets and mysteries of our Order?'

'I am,' replied Crowley.

He was ordered to kneel and place his right hand upon a white triangle, an attitude which symbolised his active aspiration towards the Higher Soul. He bowed his head and was touched once with the sceptre. Then he repeated, after the Hierophant, his obligations: to keep the Order secret; to maintain kindly and benevolent relations with its members; and to prosecute with zeal the study of the occult sciences.

The penalty for breaking this oath was severe: a hostile current would be set in motion against him; it would cause him to fall slain or paralysed 'as if blasted by a lightning flash! So help me the Lord of the Universe and my own Higher Soul.'

'Child of Darkness!' cried the Hierophant, terminating the ceremony. 'Long hast thou dwelt in darkness. Quit the night and seek the day!'

The hood over Aleister Crowley's head was then removed, and he joyously arose with the light of understanding already beginning to shine in his eyes, and the magical name, or motto, of Perdurabo, 'I will endure to the end'.

Thus was born in the Isis-Urania Temple in Great Queen Street, Brother Perdurabo, a Neophyte $0^{\circ} = 0^{\circ}$ of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

These grades were identified with the ten Sephiroth (wheels or spheres) of the Cabbalistic Tree of Life, symbol of the universe. To judge from the way Crowley swarmed up them, the first stages are comparatively easy; the later stages, from Philosophus $4^{\circ} = 7^{\circ}$, extremely difficult. Very few people have reached the stage of Philosophus, which places the aspirant on the threshold of Knowledge of, and Conversation with, his Holy Guardian Angel. The higher stages are more difficult still because, from Adeptus Minor, they entail complete devotion to one's Holy Guardian Angel. As for the last three stages, Master of the Temple, Magus, and Ipsissimus ('his own very self'), these can be achieved, in the Golden Dawn system, only by souls of the very highest order, the equivalent of Mahatmas. Mathers himself got no higher than the grade of Adeptus Exemptus $7^{\circ} = 4^{\circ}$.

In December 1898, Crowley took the grade of Zelator, and those of Theoricus and Practicus in the two following months. The Order insisted upon a three months' breathing space before members could leap to the next grade, so Crowley did not become a Philosophus until May; he certainly did better in the Golden Dawn than at Trinity College where, after three years' study, he was given no degree at all.

Mathers, searching for a system of magic which really worked, had discovered in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris a strange and unique manuscript, *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, 'as delivered by Abraham the Jew unto his son, Lamech, AD 1458'. The treatise was originally written in Hebrew; the version in the Library of the Arsenal is in old French, which Mathers proceeded to turn into English. He was not the first in modern times to make use of Abra-Melin. Eliphas Lévi had dipped into it; also Edward Robert Bulwer, second Baron and first Earl Lytton (1831–91), novelist and Viceroy of India, who

was always on the track of things magical. Lévi is said to have drawn some of his power from Abra-Melin.

Abraham the Jew (or his Master, Abra-Melin) seems to have been an honest man. His magic does not explain one mystery by another, but is a kind of teach-yourself system in which some practical guidance is given for those who wish to impose their will on nature. Since contemplation, prayer, and abstinence are enjoined, the magic of the Mage who called himself Abra-Melin is, in essence, the same as that Eastern magic commonly known as

yoga. For this reason, perhaps, it works.

In magic, there have always been two schools, the one invoking the forces of good, the other evoking the forces of evil, or white and black magic. Now, Abra-Melin teaches that the good, or angelic, forces are superior in power to the bad, or satanic forces; and that the latter, as a punishment, have to serve the former. All material effects, all phenomena are the result of the actions of evil spirits working under the directions of good ones. And sometimes the other way round, for bad spirits occasionally manage to escape and, revengefully, do what harm they can. These satanic forces conclude pacts with men and hold them in their power as Mephistopheles held Dr Faustus; for man is the middle nature between angels and demons, and has attendant upon him a Holy Guardian Angel and a Malevolent Demon. The practising magician has therefore to lead a strictly pure life. By prayer and contemplation in a suitable place (an oratory) he can call forth his Holy Guardian Angel, who will instruct him in the right use of the Powers of Darkness. On the other hand, if he fails to steer clear of temptation he will speedily become a prey to the Malevolent Demon and his career will be a series of misfortunes, ending at his death with rapid descent to hell.

There is no general ritual in the magic of Abra-Melin, only lists of angels and demons to be evoked, and of talismans to be consecrated for such purposes as bringing the dead back to life, flying in the air, exciting or quelling tempests, getting gold, or inflaming lust between persons of the magician's choosing. The snag is that nothing can be done until the Holy Guardian Angel appears 'in unequalled beauty' after six months active preparation and tells the aspirant what method to follow for this or that purpose.

Abra-Melin gives warning that when the aspirant starts to perform the operation of invoking his Holy Guardian Angel, he will find himself strenuously opposed by his family. He must therefore shun them and go off into the wilderness. Crowley, by now almost

an outcast from his mother, uncle, aunts, was only too pleased to leave home. So he took a flat in Chancery Lane, in the City, and by way of disguise, gave out that he was Count Vladimir Svareff. A collection of poems entitled *Jezebel* appeared under this new name which, he said, he had adopted to increase his knowledge of mankind. He had seen how servile Cambridge tradesmen were towards members of the University: now he would learn how they behaved towards a Russian aristocrat.

He furnished two of the rooms in the flat as temples, one for the performance of white magic, the other for black. The walls of the white temple were lined with six large looking glasses for the purpose of throwing back the force of the invocations; the black temple¹ was empty, save for an altar supported by the figure of an ebony negro standing on his hands, and a human skeleton which Brother Perdurabo, in an effort to bring it back to life, fed on blood, small birds and beef tea. And both temples had their magic circle and pentagram on the floor.

During one of the ceremonies at the Isis-Urania temple of the Golden Dawn in Great Queen Street, Crowley became aware of a tremendous magical force. It emanated from a young man with luminous eyes and a mass of black, untidy hair. This was Brother Iehi Aour, called among men Allan Bennett. The fame of Iehi Aour ('Let there be light'), who was three years older than Crowley, was immense; he was esteemed second only to Mathers himself.

After the ceremony and while they were unrobing in another room, Iehi Aour suddenly came up to Perdurabo, looked penetratingly at him and said in an almost menacing manner, 'Little Brother, you have been meddling with the Goetia!'

Perdurabo denied having touched the Goetia, a term meaning those operations of magic which deal with malignant or unenlightened forces.

'In that case,' rejoined Iehi Aour, 'the Goetia has been meddling with you.'

Crowley made no comment on this charge but recorded it as if he were inclined to agree. In Perdurabo's face, or in his aura, Iehi Aour had observed, it seems, the presence of something evil.

The next day, Crowley went in search of Allan Bennett and found him in a tenement slum south of the Thames which he shared with another Brother of the Order. He was shocked to see

1 The black magic temple may have been merely a large cupboard.

the Very Honoured Brother Iehi Aour living in poverty and discomfort, and he invited him to share his flat in Chancery Lane with him. On the condition that he should be Perdurabo's guru and teach him all he knew, Iehi Aour accepted the offer.

Crowley had come to the end of his search; he had, at last, found the Master he needed. Bennett moved into Chancery Lane, and soon these two seekers after the light were performing the magic ceremonies of their Order – evoking and banishing spirits, consecrating talismans and so on. The holy guru was, alas, ill with asthma which he relieved with opium, morphine and cocaine, switching from one to the other after periods of about a month. I have seen him in bed for a week, only recovering consciousness sufficiently to reach for the bottle [of chloroform] and sponge, said Crowley, who was himself to suffer almost as badly from this complaint. And Brother Iehi Aour, who had been trained as a chemist, told Brother Perdurabo of an ancient tradition about a drug whose use 'will open the gates of the World behind the Veil of Matter'.

Crowley was determined to find this drug, and he began to experiment upon himself, and others, with opium, cocaine, and hashish; he had no difficulty in getting these narcotics, for the Dangerous Drugs Act was not passed till 1921.

He was not afraid of becoming an addict because he rejected the theory of 'irresistible fascination'; moral rectitude, he said, was his safeguard. But his moral rectitude was no safeguard against magical accidents in his flat, where the forces of good and evil jostled each other. After returning one night from dinner with Brother Volo Noscere (George Cecil Jones), he found an enormous and mysterious black cat on the stairs, his temple broken into, the altar overthrown and the furniture tossed in all directions.

'And then the fun began. Round and round the big library tramped the devils all the evening, an endless procession; 316 of them we counted, described, named, and put down in a book. It was the most awesome and ghastly experience I had known.'

Crowley described his sexual life at this time as 'powerful and passionate'. It continued to be so until early middle age when his sexual drive was reduced by drugs.

At the age of fifteen, he lost his virginity, apparently to a girl he met in Torquay; the event is described rather vaguely in *The Confessions*. Through her 'the obsession of sin fell from my shoulders

into the sea of oblivion'. Elsewhere he wrote that his first act of fornication was with a country girl in the open air. Then, one Sunday morning shortly afterwards, while his family were at the 'morning meeting', he copulated with the new parlour maid on his mother's bed. He accused the girl of the lowest motive and of trying to blackmail him. She promptly lost her job.

Before he was twenty, he was determined to try everything in the way of sexual experience, an ambition which, as his life shows, he amply fulfilled; but as he made out of coitus an act of worship or of magic, a 'magical affirmation', as he sometimes called it, his fornications are more curious than those, for example, of Casanova. His urge for sexual relations while at the University was 'a blind, horrible ache for relief', and forty-eight hours never passed without this ache being alleviated.

He had a low opinion of women. They should be, he said, brought round to the back door like the milk. For this reason, perhaps, he was very brief in this account of his mistress of this time, 'a seductive siren whose husband was a colonel in India'.

'Little by little I overcame my passion for her, and we parted. She wrote to me frequently and tried to shake my resolution, but I stood firm.'

He would perhaps not have mentioned her at all, had it not been for this incident: Allan Bennett wanted to go East to study Buddhism on the spot and breathe the air of a warmer climate. Although Crowley could have paid his fare to Ceylon, he declined to do so because, he said, such an act would destroy the freedom of their relationship. Instead he conjured up to visible appearance the mighty spirit Buer, 'who healeth all distempers in man and governeth fifty Legions of Spirits', and asked him to supply Bennett's fare.

The next day Aleister received a letter from the seductive siren who was seductive no longer, begging him to call at her hotel. 'I can't remember how it came into my mind to do what I did, but I went to see her. She begged me to come back to her, and offered to do anything I wanted.'

'You are making a mess of your life by your selfishness,' Aleister said to her. 'I will give you a chance to do an absolutely unfettered act. Give me a hundred pounds. I won't tell you whom it's for, except that it's not for myself. I have private reasons for not using my own money in this matter.'

The private reasons were that he had not as much money as he

claimed to have, and it was not his habit, anyhow, to give away money, not even to a Brother of the Order. He expected his friends, especially women, to give him money.

'So much for Buer,' commented Crowley gleefully after the colonel's wife had given him what he had asked for. Over twenty years later, when Crowley's name had become familiar to the world, this incident was published in the *Sunday Express*. 'He came under the notice of the police in 1900, when he stole £200 from a widow with whom he cohabited; the woman, however, refused to prosecute.'

The year, at least, is right, for it was in 1900 that Allan Bennett left for Ceylon, and Crowley for Scotland. Crowley took with him the large looking-glasses from his temple.

4 THE LAIRD OF BOLESKINE

If you wish to perform the operation of conjuring up your Holy Guardian Angel, says the magician Abra-Melin, you must first of all construct an oratory in a secluded spot. This oratory, or temple, should have a door opening northwards on to a terrace covered with fine river sand. At the end of the terrace there should be a lodge where the evil spirits (who can be approached safely only after the Holy Guardian Angel has been invoked) may congregate. For they are prohibited in the oratory. And this lodge should have windows on all sides so that the demons therein may be seen more easily.

Where should Perdurabo build his oratory? He wandered about the Lake District and into Scotland, looking for a suitable place, and finally decided upon a fairly large but single-storeyed house called Boleskine, near the village of Foyers. Loch Ness lay before it and a hill behind it; it was an ideal spot for the practice of Abra-Melin magic. Brother Perdurabo made his oratory in one of the rooms facing north, and he collected sand from the lake for his terrace as instructed. Easter was the season for commencing the operation, so meanwhile he went salmon-fishing, love-making, and terrorising the local inhabitants and sheep with his three companions: a Great Dane, an Alsatian (or a German sheep dog as it was then called), and a bulldog.

In accordance with the old Scottish practice of calling a proprietor of land a laird, he described himself as the Laird of Boleskine, and sometimes as the Laird of Boleskine and Abertarff, which he thought more appropriate than Mr Aleister Crowley for a man with a house and two acres of ground in the wilds of Scotland. By the word 'Laird' Crowley understood not so much 'landlord' as 'lord'; and this was now his title when he left his highland home and descended on the sassenachs over the border. Accordingly, he had a coronet embossed on his notepaper, with a gilded B (for Boleskine) underneath and, on other sheets of notepaper, a number of the best coats of arms, with an aphorism in Sanskrit thrown in.

Conjuring up Abra-Melin demons is a ticklish business. Crowley successfully raised them – 'the lodge and the terrace,' he

wrote, 'soon became peopled with shadowy shapes,' - but he was unable to control them. Oriens, Paimon, Ariton, Amaimon, and their hundred and eleven servitors escaped from the lodge. entered the house and wrought havoc: his coachman, hitherto a teetotaller, fell into delirium tremens; a clairvoyante whom he had brought from London returned there and became a prostitute; his housekeeper, 'unable to bear the eeriness of the place', vanished; a madness settled upon one of the workmen employed on the estate and he tried to kill the Laird of Boleskine. Even the butcher down in the village was affected through Crowley's casually jotting down on one of his bills the names of two demons, viz. Elerion and Mabakiel, which mean respectively 'laughter' and 'lamentation'. Conjointly these two words signify 'unlooked-for sorrow suddenly descending upon happiness'. Alas, only too true, for while cutting up a joint for a customer, the butcher accidentally severed his femoral artery and promptly died.

The Astral Plane was a much explored territory. Crowley has left a record of some of his ascents which were performed by projecting his own image outwards, then transferring his consciousness to it. Next, by an invocation of the right forces, he made this picture of himself rise upwards. Sometimes he used the crystal for this purpose. He saw Christ with the woman of Samaria, then himself crucified; he stood within the Divine Light with a crown of twelve stars upon his head; the earth opened for him to enter into its very centre, where he climbed the peak of a high mountain. Many dragons sprang upon him as he approached the Secret Sanctuary, but he overcame them all with a word.

This was an alchemical vision of his success in the Great Work.

Crowley realised that he was born with all the talents required for a great magician. It is not surprising that he had attained the Grades of Practicus and Philosophus so speedily.

In 1890, MacGregor Mathers was earning his living as the curator of the Horniman Museum at Forest Hill. In 1891, the appointment ceased; he had quarrelled with Frederick J. Horniman and been dismissed. But Horniman's daughter, Annie (known to her friends as Tabby), who had been a fellow student at the Slade with Mathers's wife, Moina Bergson (sister of the philosopher), gave him £443 a year and on this he went to live in Paris at 121 Boulevard St-Michel.

During the Autumn of 1896, he began work on the Abra-Melin

manuscript in the Bibliotheque de l'Arsenal, at which time he was living at number 87, rue Mozart, in the pleasant suburb of Auteuil.

In his studies of Egyptian religion, he had discovered a number of long-forgotten truths; then, one night, the goddess Isis herself appeared to him and ordered him to proclaim her divinity.

He decorated the largest room in his apartment in the rue Mozart as an Egyptian temple and from about 1898, he began to perform Egyptian Masses for the entertainment and instruction of his friends and followers. In these rites, he appeared in a long white robe; round his waist was a metal belt engraved with the signs of the zodiac; on his wrists and ankles were sacred bracelets, and over his shoulder a leopard skin, the spots symbolic of the stars. His wife, Moina, was clad in a long white chiffon robe, her flowing hair expressive of the light radiating through the universe. Upon her head were a cone (probably of paper) and a lotus flower. 'The lotus springs up from the muddy waters of the Nile,' said Mathers. 'The cone is the flame of life. The whole idea of the dress of the priestess is that the life of matter is purified and ruled by the divine spirit of life from above.'

Isis-worshippers crowded the temple in number 87, rue Mozart. A certain Jules Bois, a well known journalist, was so impressed by Mathers's devotions that he urged him to undertake them in public. Mathers was not lacking in ambition but the rites were of a private nature; in fact, a journalist called André Gaucher was admitted to them only after being taken there in a carriage blindfold. After an inward struggle, Mathers carried the performance over to the Théâtre Bodinière (run by M. Bodinier) at number 18. rue Saint-Lazare. Earlier, it had been called the Théâtre d'Application, a shadow theatre. In the centre of the stage was an enormous coloured plaster figure of Isis, flanked by the figures of other Egyptian gods and goddesses. Facing them was an altar upon which was a Tibetan green stone lamp, burning with an eternal flame. The Hierophant Rameses (Mathers) appeared out of the shadows. He held a sistrum or rattle with which he shattered the silence; in the other hand he carried a spray of lotus. He approached the altar and in a powerful voice recited some prayers from the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

Then the High Priestess Anari (Moina Mathers) appeared. In a passionate and penetrating voice, she invoked the goddess Isis. When she had finished a young Parisian lady danced the dance of the four elements.

The whole performance lasted about two hours and was 'artistic in the extreme' according to André Gaucher who reported on it for *L'Echo du Merveilleux*.

Mathers had a secretive and suspicious nature; at times, he believed that his colleagues were plotting against him. Crowley said of him that he was excessively devoted to Mars. His autocratic and emphatic manner suggests paranoia.

From 1897, Mrs Emery was Mathers's representative in London; it was a position of great responsibility, and one requiring an infinite amount of tact. Although there was a temple of the Order in Paris, most of the Brethren were in Britain, and Mathers was probably receiving some modest financial support frrom them. He needed it, for in 1896, Tabby Horniman, following a quarrel, had cut off his allowance, and been expelled from the Order. Mrs Emery was the Instructor of Ritual in the Order. As she was also Florence Farr, the accomplished actress, she was able to fulfil this role to perfection. She was not, however, so capable of fulfilling the role of Mathers's representative, and by 1900 the friction between them was such that she offered him her resignation. And fed up with the whole business, she proposed that they close down the Isis-Urania Temple, the members of which went to the Philosophus Grade $4^{\circ} = 7^{\circ}$. 'I refuse definitely to close the Isis-Urania Temple,' replied Mathers. One important reason against shutting this Temple was that it would cut off the flow of candidates to the Second Order.

The Second Order in the Great White Brotherhood was the Order of the Red Rose and the Golden Cross, a Rosicrucian Order for advanced Adepts. It had been founded by Mathers in 1892 when he had produced a $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ ritual and said that he had received it from the Secret Chiefs.

In the middle of this dispute, Crowley appeared from Boleskine with a request for further advancement in the Order. His request was perfectly legitimate but to his surprise the Cancellarius of the Second Order – for that was the door Crowley was knocking on – declined to admit him.

Indignantly, Crowley set off for Paris on 13 January 1900 to get Mathers to initiate him instead. He had met Mathers for the first time during the previous May. He described him as 'unquestionably a Magician of extraordinary attainment. He was a scholar and a gentleman. He had that habit of authority which inspires confidence because it never doubts itself. A man who makes such claims as he did cannot be judged by conventional codes and

canons.'1 The Laird of Boleskine and Abertarff, who was clad in full Highland dress, and the Comte de Glenstrae, neither of whom had a drop of Scots blood in their veins, confronted each other again. In devotion to his Chief, Crowley offered to put his fortune unreservedly at Mathers's disposal. It is difficult to say who hoodwinked the other more. They were more like each other than they were aware. After getting Brother Perdurabo to swear solemn oaths of obedience and secrecy, Brother Deo Duce Comite Ferro,² to call Mathers by his magical name, initiated him into the 5° = 6° grade. Crowley triumphantly recorded the event; 'Admitted to the Glory of Tiphereth' (the sixth Sephira on the Tree of Life); that is, he had leapt over the Portal or Probationary Grade, and crashed through into the Second Order; he was now a full Adeptus Minor. He returned to London, hurried round to the headquarters of the Second Order at 36 Blythe Road, Hammersmith, to demand of a Miss Cracknell, the Secretary of the Order, who dispensed the documents, the rituals consonant with his new and exalted Grade. But another disappointment awaited him. On the grounds that they did not accept Mathers's initiation of him, she refused to give him the rituals. Crowley returned to Paris to inform Mathers. 'Early in 1900 I applied to the Second Order in London for the documents to which my initiation in Paris entitled me. They were refused in terms which made it clear that the London body was in open revolt against the Chief, though afraid to declare its intentions.'3

Crowley was mistaken: the London dv were not afraid to declare their intentions, and in any consists behaviour was of the kind which sooner or later created the opposition he feared. He was, above all, afraid that his Brethren in London would invite Sapere Aude (Westcott) back into the Order and set him up in his place. To circumvent this, he informed Mrs Emery in a letter dated 16 February 1900 that Sapere Aude had forged the whole correspondence with Anna Sprengel, raising doubts about her very existence.

For this forces me to tell you plainly (and, understand me well, I can prove to the hilt every word which I here say and more, and were I confronted with S.A., I should say the same) though for the sake of the Order, and for the circumstance that it

would mean so deadly a blow to S.A.'s reputation, I entreat you to keep this secret from the *Order*, for the present, at least, though you are at perfect liberty to show *him* this if you think fit, after mature consideration. He has NEVER been at any time either in personal or written communication with the Secret Chiefs of the Order, he having either himself forged or procured to be forged the professed correspondence between him and them, and my tongue having been tied all these years by a Previous Oath of Secrecy to him, demanded by him, from me, before showing me what he had either done or caused to be done or both...

Mrs Emery informed her senior colleagues and they promptly set up a committee to investigate this accusation which threatened to remove the magical ground from under their feet. When Mathers heard of this committee, he reacted with fury, and denied their right to form any such committee. 'I do not recognize the right of the Second Order either to elect a committee without my authority and consent. . . . I annul the committee and I annul the resolutions passed at the meeting of the 24th of March 1900 . . . '(Letter to Mrs Emery dated 2 April 1900.)

About the same time Mathers was listening to, and approving of, Crowley's plan for bringing the recalcitrant members of the Order to heel. He, Brother Perdurabo, would break into the premises of the Second Order, put new locks on the doors, and, during the course of two or three days, summon the members to appear before him. He would vear a mask, and a scribe would be in attendance, to take down the answers to questions. The members of the Second Order were all of the $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ Grade. He proposed, therefore, to ask them first of all if they believed in the truth of the doctrines of this grade. Yes or no. If yes, he would ask if they believed that these doctrines sprang from 'a pure source only' - i.e. the Secret Chiefs. If they replied no, he would downgrade them to 'be a Lord of the Paths in the Portal in the Vault of the Adepts' - i.e. they would have to stay on the threshold of the Second Order. They were then to be asked: 'Do you solemnly promise to cease these unseemly disputes as to the headship of this Order? I for my part can assure you from my own knowledge that D.D.C.F. [Mathers] is really a $7^{\circ} = 4^{\circ}$.' (i.e. an Adeptus Exemptus, the highest grade in the Second Order, a grade which confers authority to govern the Orders of the Rose Cross and the Golden Dawn. Only Mathers was of this grade.)

¹ The Confessions of Aleister Crowley.

^{2 &#}x27;With God as my leader and the Sword as my Companion.'

³ The Confessions of Aleister Crowley.

Crowley then proposed to get the members to sign a paper, in which they would solemnly affirm their loyalty to Mathers; if they would not sign, he would expel them from the Order.

The members of the Outer Order (the Golden Dawn) were also to be summoned to him, questioned about their beliefs, and asked to sign the pledge of loyalty to Mathers.

Finally, the Vault was to be reconsecrated.

The Vault was supposed to be a replica of the vault in which the legendary founder of the Order of the Red Rose and the Golden Cross, Christian Rosenkreutz, was buried in the Abiegnus Mountain at the age of 106 in the 15th century. It was of a wooden construction, seven-sided, each side being five feet wide and eight feet high. On the ceiling was painted a seven-sided figure, enclosing a seven-pointed star, and within the star the upward-pointing triangle of Fire, and inside the triangle the Rose of twenty-two petals. Throughout the whole scheme was disposed the Paths and Sephiroth (Emanations) of the Tree of Life, and the planetary influences, the entire figure being worked in gold and white.

On the floor of the Vault was painted another seven-sided figure of exactly the same size, also enclosing a seven-pointed star, within which was an inverted or downward-pointing triangle of Water, encircled by the Great Red Dragon of Seven Heads. Around each Dragon's Head were inscribed the title of the averse and evil Sephiroth of the Qliphoth, and in each angle of the triangle, the names of the Dark Angels, Satariel, Uriel, and Thaumiel. But within this evil triangle there was traced the redeeming symbol of the Golden Cross, charged with the Red Rose of seven times seven petals. The whole design was worked in white on black, the seven-headed Dragon being scarlet.

Each of the seven walls was divided into forty squares, in each of which were painted zodiacal, planetary, alchemical symbols and Hebrew letters. Each wall was painted a different colour, the whole following the colours of the rainbow.

The Vault of Rosenkreutz was Mathers's child, and the use to which he put it showed that he had a sense of drama, if not of humour. The candidate for admission to the Second Order was

1 From the Limitless Light (Ain Soph) there flowed and formed ten Emanations (the Sephiroth). In the process of formation, some of the energy overflowed, making what is known as the Qlipha of each Emanation; this was seized on by the demons and made their abode. Hence the Qliphothic or Evil nature of each averse or reflected Sephira.

conducted into the Vault where he found an altar. The Second and Third Adepts moved away the altar to reveal a pastos or coffin. They proceeded to remove the lid of the pastos, disclosing the Chief Adept in full regalia, the Egyptian nemyss or hood on his head. He symbolised the incorruptible body of Christian Rosenkreutz. Without opening his eyes, the Chief Adept – in London until 1897 it was Dr Westcott – declaimed, 'Buried with that Light in a mystical death, rising again in a mystical resurrection, cleansed and purified through Him our Master, O Brother of the Cross and the Rose, like Him, O Adepts of all ages, have ye toiled.' The symbolism of the Tomb was then explained to the initiate.

With the title of Envoy Plenipotentiary, and with Mathers's letters of authority, Crowley left Paris for London. His aim was to capture the Vault of Christian Rosenkreutz.

On Monday 16 April, he made a preliminary reconnaissance of 36 Blythe Road, Hammersmith. The rooms of the Order were on the first floor. He persuaded the landlord, a Mr Wilkinson, that he had authority to enter. 'Saw landlord and convinced him,' he wrote in his *Magical Record*. 'Saw Fidelis and arranged final details capture of Vault. Engaged chucker-out at a public house in Leicester Square.'

The following day, Crowley and his mistress, Elaine Simpson (Sister Fidelis of the Golden Dawn), arrived at 36 Blythe Road. Elaine was a few years older than Crowley; she was already in 1892 a $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$. They found Miss Cracknell in the rooms, told her that they had come to take possession of them in the name of Deo Duce Comite Ferro, and there and then they ejected her. (Crowley described Miss Cracknell as 'a Sapphic crack that was never filled'.) She ran to the nearest post office and sent a telegram to E. A. Hunter (Frater Hora et Semper), a Senior Member of the Second Order, saying 'Come at once to Blythe Road, something awful has happened'.

Hunter appeared. He found that the rooms which had been closed by order of Mrs Emery had been broken into and new locks put on the doors. Crowley was indeed in possession. In his account of the confrontation, Hunter said that he entered the rooms after 'a certain resistance'. Crowley immediately informed him that Miss Cracknell, who was looking over Hunter's shoulder must leave immediately because he had suspended her. While they were arguing, Mrs Emery arrived. There was no shifting Crowley by their arguments; he had captured the Vault and that was that.

Mrs Emery went away and returned with a constable who, after hearing both sides, ordered Crowley to leave.

Nothing seems to have happened on the Wednesday, but the next day, Thursday 19 April, Hunter and W. B. Yeats called at Blythe Road to inquire from Wilkinson how it was that he had allowed Crowley to break into the rooms. In the middle of the discussion Crowley appeared. He was wearing Highland dress, a black mask over his face, a plaid thrown over his head and shoulders to complete his disguise. On his breast was an enormous gilt cross and at his side a dagger. Elaine, whom he had appointed as his Scribe, was with him. He had been disappointed at not finding the chucker-out on the doorstep. Hunter and Yeats told him to go at once; he had no right whatsoever to enter the premises. Crowley stood firm. He had every right; he was authorised to act for Deo Duce Comite Ferro. And to prove it, he produced Mathers's declaration which was expressed in flamboyant and commanding terms.

That morning a wig from Willie Clarkson, the famous wigmaker, addressed to Miss Elaine Simpson, had arrived at 36 Blythe Road; it was part of the disguise which she required for the difficult proceedings which lay ahead. And throughout the day, numerous telegrams, including one from abroad, came for MacGregor Mathers, as if he had installed himself in the premises of the Second Order. All the telegrams were refused.

At Yeats's request, Wilkinson sent for a constable who told Crowley and Elaine to leave. As they did so, Elaine was handed the parcel containing the wig.

It was now noon. At one o'clock the chucker-out arrived. He told Hunter and Yeats that he had been looking all over London for Blythe Road. 'He did not quite know what he had come for, thought that there was some kind of entertainment. Mr Crowley, he said, had engaged him outside the Alhambra.'

That same day, Mathers, Elaine Simpson and her mother¹ were expelled from the Order. Crowley was not expelled because he was not a member of the Order.

In a letter to Lady Gregory, dated 25 April, Yeats disclosed why they had declined to let Crowley into the Second Order.

1 '... my Sister Fidelis was cursed with a horrible mother, a sixthrate singer, a first-rate snob, with dewlaps and a paunch; a matchmaker, mischief-maker, maudlin and muddle-headed. The ghastly hag put it all round London and New York that I had entered her daughter's room at night in my Body of Light' (The Confessions of Aleister Crowley). I have had a bad time of it lately. I told you I was putting Mac-Gregor out of the Kabbala [the Order]. Well, last week, he sent a mad person whom we had refused to initiate – to take possession of the rooms and papers of the Society. This person seized the rooms and on being ejected attempted to retake possession. . . . Having failed in this he has taken out a summons on the ground that he is 'Mathers's envoy', and that there is nothing in the constitution of the Society to enable us to depose Mathers. The envoy is really one Crowley, a quite unspeakable person. He is I believe seeking vengeance for our refusal to initiate him. We did not admit him because we did not think a mystical society was intended to be a reformatory.

To Crowley's mind, Yeats, Hunter, Mrs Emery and the rest had seized the Vault which rightfully belonged to Mathers. Crowley had failed to get it by force; he now tried law. Hence the summons referred to in Yeats's letter. Crowley was in court on the day – 28 April – but the defendants, in addition to briefing a distinguished counsel, had sworn Christian Rosenkreutz's Vault at a sum beyond the jurisdiction of the court. The case was therefore withdrawn and Crowley, who had brought it, was ordered to pay £5 costs.

This was the quarrel which saw the beginning of the end of the original Golden Dawn. The 'Envoy Plenipotentiary' increased the uproar and made MacGregor Mathers even less acceptable to his Brethren in London. The attempts to reorganise the Order, reflected in Yeats's anonymously issued pamphlet, Is the Order of the R[osae] R[ubeae] et A[ureae] C[rucis] to remain a Magical Order? (February–March 1901), were ineffectual, for magical societies are not democratic but hierarchic and, consequently, autocratic. MacGregor Mathers was the leader of the Golden Dawn and of the Rose Cross, and Crowley was his true heir.

Crowley's quarrel with Yeats (Frater Demon Est Deus Inversus) went back to the previous year. One night he called on this Brother to show him his *Jephthah*, which was then in page-proof. He expected Yeats to acclaim him as fellow poet and genius; instead of which

he forced himself to utter a few polite conventionalities, but I could see what the truth of the matter was. I had by this time become fairly expert in clairvoyance, clairaudience and clair-sentience. But it would have been a very dull person indeed who failed to recognize the black, bilious rage that shook him

to the soul. I instance this as a proof that Yeats was a genuine poet at heart, for a mere charlatan would have known that he had no cause to fear an authentic poet. What hurt him was the knowledge of his own incomparable inferiority.

In 1915, in a letter to John Quinn, the American lawyer and patron of the arts – Quinn had bought a parcel of Crowley's books and manuscripts – Yeats said that he thought Crowley mad but he 'has written about six lines, amid much bad rhetoric, of real poetry'.

Crowley returned to Paris in May 1900 to report to Mathers his progress in the fight against the rebels. He found two members of the Order staying with Deo Duce Comite Ferro. They had recently come back from Mexico. By their account, Mexico seemed an interesting place, so Crowley flung a few things into a bag and went there.

To go to the ends of the earth upon an impulse was characteristic of him; it was the way he did things, acting out all his impulses; but perhaps his sudden departure for Mexico at this time may have been due to the fact that the police wanted to question him about the money he had received from the 'colonel's widow'.

His first stop on the way to Mexico was New York, where he arrived at the height of a heat wave which, he said, was killing about a hundred people a day. He was appalled at the thought that Mexico was much hotter and almost changed his mind about going there. His three days in New York were mainly spent in crawling in and out of the bath; then he fled on the train to Mexico City.

He hired a house overlooking the Alameda, the beautiful park in the centre of the city, and engaged a young Indian girl to look after him and share his bed. He settled down to magic and made his first experiments in acquiring invisibility by invoking the god of silence, Harpocrates.

And unto ye, O forces of Akasa,¹ do I now address my Will. In the Great Names Exarp, Hcoma, Nanta and Bitom,² By the mysterious letters and sigils of the Great Tablet of Union. By the mighty Name of AHIH, AGLA, IHVH, ALHIM.³

1 The Astral Light.

By the Great God Harpocrates;
By your deep purple darkness:
By my white and brilliant light do I conjure ye;
Collect yourself together about me: clothe this astral form with a shroud of darkness.

After weeks of prayer and practice, he achieved his first success: his reflection in the looking-glass became faint and flickering. Then he walked out into Mexico City with a gold and jewelled crown upon his head and a scarlet cloak about his shoulders without attracting the slightest attention. Doubtless the clear light of Mexico helped to penetrate what was left of his corporality.

One afternoon, he picked up a woman who attracted him by 'the insatiable intensity of passion that blazed from her evil inscrutable eyes, and tortured her worn face into a whirlpool of seductive sin'. She took him with her into the slum where she lived, and there he passed a few delirious hours. Crowley records the incident in his Confessions, not as an indication of his sexual taste or his love for things morbid and ugly, but merely as a preamble to the verse drama. Tannhäuser, which he wrote immediately afterwards. He had been so stimulated by this Mexican whore that when he left her, he was able to sit down in his hotel and labour for sixty-seven continuous hours on the rhymed conversation between Venus and Tannhäuser. He had seen the opera at Covent Garden, the part of Venus being sung by an American prima donna whom he had met at one of Mathers's occult performances in Paris. They fell in love and became engaged to be married but Crowley only hints at this affair which, anyhow, was cut short by his sudden departure for Mexico.

Tannhäuser, 'A Story of All Time', in four acts and an epilogue, tells us nothing of the surfeit of lust that had stimulated him to poetry, and nothing about the mysterious American prima donna. Had he written about the one or the other, the hag in the slum or the singer in the opera, he might have made a genuine poem; instead we are fobbed off with bombastic verses around the German legend. Why he was prompted to follow the woman with the sin-worn face into her poor home, and what she meant to him as they lay in each other's arms, he does not say; he tells us only that he was fascinated by her face and left her in a fever.

Three aspects of Crowley's psychology have by now become clear. One: he lacked an inhibitory counter-force. He threw

² The names of the Elemental Spirits of the Tablet of Union which are invoked by the 2nd Key or Call of Enoch. Exarp is the root of the powers of Air; Hcoma that of Water; Nanta of Earth, Bitom of Fire. See *The Vision and the Voice*, chapter 11.

³ The names of God attributed to the four quarters of the Universe.

himself into any adventure that touched his fancy, the more horrible the better, and he was not afraid of madness.

Two: he needed some strong or horrific experience to get 'turned on'. Most people are 'turned on' by sitting at home with a book, listening to music, or looking at a painting. Crowley needed his Mexican whore with the worn face before he could write his verses about Tannhäuser. In this sense, then, I say that he lacked imagination. As the course of his life shows, he went to great lengths to be stimulated; he could never get enough of fantastic adventures; the message did not come through otherwise.

Three: he had no respect for his own (or anyone else's) body. He was hardly conscious of himself as a physical body and would have been mildly surprised had someone pointed out to him that he extended in space.

It follows from this that he was not afraid of catching syphilis. 'J'ai attrapé le syphilis en 1897,' he wrote in the twenties to his French doctor, 'me suis soigneusement mercurialisé, n'ai jamais eu de symptômes ultra-sérieux et rien du tout depuis 1917.'

He was always scornful of those who avoid promiscuity out of fear of venereal disease, and he went so far as to assert with the force of someone who has a hidden motive for his absurd and dangerous opinions, that the basis of genius is syphilis and that 'it would be salutary [!] for every male to be impregnated with the germs of this virus in order to facilitate the culture of individual genius'.²

In middle age, while at his Abbey of Thelema, he summed himself up thus:

I am to Thee³ the harlot, crowned with poison and gold, my garment many-coloured, soiled with shame and smeared with blood, who for no price but of wantonness have prostituted myself to all that lusted after me, nay, who have plucked unwilling sleeves, and with seduction, bribe, and threat multiplied my stuprations.⁴ I have made my flesh rotten, my blood venomous, my nerves hell-tortured, my brain hag-ridden, I have infected the round world with corruption'.⁵

1 'I caught syphilis in 1897, had myself carefully mercurialised, and never had very serious symptoms and nothing at all since 1917.'

2 The Magical Record, 10 August 1930.

3 Aiwass, Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel.

4 Stuprator, a defiler, debaucher, ravisher.

5 The Magical Record, 11 July 1920.

One day his Indian girl, having learned about his interest in mountains, called him up to the roof of their house and pointed out two snow-capped peaks, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihautl, both over 17,000 feet, that is, higher than the Alps by 2,000 feet, but not so difficult to climb. Crowley explained to her that he intended to climb these mountains which, in the clear air, look as if they are standing just outside the city gates, but he was waiting for his friend, a mighty climber of mountains, to arrive from England.

This was Oscar Eckenstein, an English mountaineer of German–Jewish extraction whom Crowley had met at Wastdale Head in Cumberland, rendezvous of mountaineers in England. Eckenstein had been a member of the Conway expedition to the Himalayas in 1892, and was a familiar figure in the Alps. He had invented a new type of crampon or climbing iron which enabled mountaineers to dispense with the laborious method of cutting steps in the ice. He was short and sturdy and seventeen years older than Crowley. Apparently Eckenstein liked Crowley. Crowley certainly liked Eckenstein. Eckenstein and Bennett were the only two people about whom he never let fall a single unfriendly remark. He called Eckenstein the greatest climber of his age. Bennett was his guru for magic. Eckenstein his master in mountaineering. It is interesting to note that all three men suffered from asthma.

'Eckenstein,' wrote Crowley to Harry Doughty in 1924, 'provided he could get three fingers on something that could be described by a man far advanced in hashish as a ledge, would be smoking his pipe on that ledge a few seconds later, and none of us could tell how he had done it; whereas I, totally incapable of the mildest gymnastic feats, used to be able to get up all sorts of places that Eckenstein could not attempt.'

Towards the end of the year, 1900, Eckenstein arrived and together they went off to Amecameca, the base of both mountains and the starting point for climbers. They began on Ixtaccihuatl, which unpronounceable word is the Aztec for 'sleeping woman. They established a camp at 14,000 feet and remained there for three weeks, climbing this beautiful mountain on all sides and living on canned food and champagne. Crowley claimed that he and Eckenstein broke several world records.

When they returned to Amecameca to celebrate their triumph, they were greeted by their host with a long face. He broke the sad news as gently as he could: Queen Victoria was dead. To his

amazement, he saw Crowley fling his hat into the air and dance for joy. To Crowley and, as Crowley believed, to many other – certainly to all artists and thinkers – Queen Victoria was sheer suffocation, a vast thick fog that enveloped them all. 'We could not see, we could not breathe,' he said; and although he admitted that under her Britain had advanced to prosperity, 'yet, somehow or other, the spirit of her age had killed everything we cared for. Smug, sleek, superficial, servile, snobbish, sentimental shopkeeping had spread everywhere.' Queen Victoria, doubtless, reminded him of another female autocrat: his mother.

Their next expedition was to Colima, over five hundred miles west of Mexico City. Near this town is an active volcano, Mount Colima. The two wanderers emerged from the forest and watched the volcano erupting. They were twelve miles away but the wind was towards them. Soon the falling ashes were burning tiny holes in their clothes. They advanced, climbed a neighbouring peak, then began the ascent of Mount Colima itself. They did not get far; their feet started to burn through their boots, and they turned back.

They climbed Popocatapetl in unusual circumstances. A Mexican newspaper, *The Herald*, had got wind of the activities of these two Englishmen, and had cast doubt on their climbing accomplishments. 'We had published nothing, made no claim,' said Crowley. Eckenstein was indignant. He went to the bar frequented by the reporters of *The Herald*, made the acquaintance of the writer of the article about himself and Crowley and invited him to join an expedition to Popocatapetl, the 'smoking mountain', and thus acquire a first-hand knowledge of mountains and of men who climb them. The reporter accepted.

One of the world's records which we had left in tatters was that for pace uphill at great heights. Long before we got to the lowest point of the rim of the crater our sceptical friend found that he couldn't go another yard – he had to turn back. We assured him that the case was common, but could easily be met by the use of the rope. So we tied him securely to the middle; Eckenstein set a fierce pace uphill, while I assisted his tugging by prodding the recalcitrant reporter with my axe. He exhausted the gamut of supplications. We replied only by cheerful and encouraging exhortations, and by increased efforts. We never checked our rush till we stood on the summit. It was probably the first time that it had ever been climbed in an unbroken

sprint. Our victim was by this time convinced that we could climb mountains. And he was certainly the sorriest sight!

Orizaba, or Citlaltepetl, 'mountain of the star', the highest peak in Mexico, they did not try; for a while they were tired of climbing mountains. But they agreed that, as soon as possible, they would organize an expedition to the Himalayas and attempt K2, the second highest mountain in the world.

Eckenstein packed up and went home and Crowley, who had spent nine and a half months in Mexico, set out for San Francisco.

I strolled across to Jaurez to kiss My Girl good-bye. O Mexico, my heart still throbs and burns whenever memory brings you to my mind! For many other countries I have more admiration and respect, but none of them rivals your fascination. Your climate, your customs, your people, your strange landscape of dreamlike enchantment rekindle my boyhood.

He would look up Allan Bennett in Ceylon – for he wanted to ask him a question about Mathers – and go home when he had climbed K2. Unlike Eckenstein, he had not yet been out East; this was going to be his Grand Tour.

He broke the journey at El Paso, the border town between Texas and Mexico, and saw three peons playing cards among a crowd in a labour camp. (The life of Aleister Crowley is a series of ecstasies, abominations, and bizarreries. The incidents he witnessed as he roamed about the world take on the same hue. We see and remember the things that touch our imagination and ignore or forget the rest.) Suddenly, one of the players flung himself across his poncho on to the man opposite, twisted his fingers into his long hair, and thrust his thumbs into the corners of his eyes.

It was over in a moment; the man's eyes were torn from their sockets and his assailant, disengaging himself by a violent jerk, was off like a streak. 'The shrieks of the mutilated man were answered by universal uproar. Some followed on foot, others ran to their bronchos, but the great majority maintained an attitude of philosophical indifference. It was no business of theirs, except so far as it might remind them to visit the barber.'

He stayed a week in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco and left on a Japanese boat for Hawaii. On Waikiki Beach, he met an American woman of Scottish origin, ten years his elder, married to a lawyer in the States, and mother of a teenage boy. She had,

THE LAIRD OF BOLESKINE

Crowley said, come to Hawaii to escape hay fever. He fell in love with her – he easily fell in and out of love and did so constantly – wrote a long poem, *Alice: An Adultery*, under her inspiration, took her with him to Japan, and there left her. He was very pleased with Alice, which contains fifty poems, one for each day of his passion.

At noon she sailed for home, a weeping bride

Widowed before the honeymoon was done.

We sobbed, and stretched our arms out, and despaired.

And – parted. Out the brute-side of truth flared:

'Thank God I've finished with that foolishness!'

Crowley did not say what caused the break-up of the affair, but whatever it was, it left him conscious of the sadness of life and of the mysterious demon who drove him darkly onwards. Alice was the first of a long line of women who taught him that he was not made for love.

Sick at heart, he sought Elaine, Sister Fidelis, who had meanwhile married a man called Witkowski and was living in Hong Kong. He thought of her fearlessness and loyalty in their struggle to capture the Vault and re-install MacGregor Mathers. She would understand him, advise him, encourage him. But he discovered to his disappointment that Elaine was now only playing at magic, and she had won first prize at a fancy dress ball held in the English colony by appearing in her Adept's robes and regalia!

He went on to Ceylon and found Allan Bennett who was staying with a holy yogi¹ in the Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo. The question which had been bothering him since he had left England and for an answer to which he had travelled three-quarters round the globe, was then put; but put in such a way that one does not know what, exactly, was being asked. However, the story runs thus:

One day Brother Iehi Aour (Bennett) and Brother Deo Duce Comite Ferro (Mathers) fell into an argument about the god Shiva, the Destroyer, whom Iehi Aour worshipped. Said I.A., 'If one repeats His name often enough, He will open His eye and destroy the Universe'.

1 Sri Paránanda, Solicitor-General of Ceylon.

D.D.C.F. disagreed. The thought that his life should depend upon Shiva's keeping his third eye shut was too much for him. Finally, I.A. sought to end the argument, which had worked Mathers into a rage, by assuming a yoga posture and repeating ad nauseam the mantra, 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva...'

'Will you stop blaspheming?' roared Mathers.

But the holy man continued only with his 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva. . . .'

'If you don't stop, I'll shoot you.' And Mathers produced a revolver.

I,A., by now concentrated, took no notice, and continued to repeat Shiva's name.

Before D.D.C.F. could pull the trigger, Sister V.N.R. (Moina Mathers) entered the room and saved the life of Brother I.A.

That is the story, but what is true about it, and what Perdurabo wanted to ask Brother I.A., he does not say.

The two seekers after truth went off together to Kandy, and hired a furnished bungalow in the hills overlooking the lake. Iehi Aour continued his yoga meditation and Perdurabo his poetry; but soon Perdurabo, too, grew interested in yoga and under I.A.'s instruction began his first serious study of the subject. This was a Magical Retirement and Crowley was in the hands of his Holy Guru.

He progressed so rapidly that within a few months he reached the state of Dhyana, which he described as a tremendous spiritual experience, the subject and object of meditation uniting with excessive violence amid blinding brilliance and unearthly music.

While Crowley went big-game hunting – he shot a buffalo with a Mauser ·303 – grew a beard, and lusted after the joys of the flesh, Allan Bennett tore away the last ties that held him to the world, and stretched out his hand for the Yellow Robe; that is, he became a Buddhist monk. The two brethren of the Golden Dawn who had shared a flat together in Chancery Lane bid each other goodbye; the one went to the mainland of India in search of new adventures, the other to a monastery in Burma.

Crowley's wanderings about India during 1901–2 produced at least one unusual experience. He wanted to visit what he called 'the most interesting part' of the big temple at Madura which was, and perhaps still is, prohibited to Europeans. Like his hero, Sir Richard Burton, who, disguised as an Arab, had entered the

forbidden city of Mecca, Perdurabo, clad only in a loincloth, held out a begging bowl in a nearby village. No one was deceived, of course, by this performance but Crowley gained the sympathy of the natives; they were impressed by his yoga and allowed him to enter some of the secret shrines, in one of which he sacrificed a goat to Bhavani. That is the story as told by Crowley.

After exploring the north of India for a few months, he thought he would like to see how Iehi Aour was getting on in Akyab, so he sailed for Rangoon, and from there proceeded up the River Irrawaddy. He decided to cut across country from Midon but before the wild Arakan hills his coolies refused to go on, so Crowley and his companion (a man called Edward Thornton whom he had met in Calcutta) decided to turn back. They hired a thirty-five-foot-long, dug-out type of boat with an awning in the middle, just broad enough for two men to pass, and started down stream. Although ill with malaria, Perdurabo sat at the stern with a rifle across his knee, potting at every animal that came in sight.

Forty-five years later, when I was with him in the little room in the Hastings boarding-house, to which he had come on his last Magical Retirement – we were surrounded by his books and paintings, one of which was of his nasty-looking lover, Camille, and it was raining outside – he cast away gloom by suddenly telling me of a trip in a dug-out down the Irrawaddy, a rifle across his knee. He broke into song. That was what he'd like to do again, he said. It was a flicker from an almost extinguished fire.

He arrived in Akyab on 13 February 1902, and rushed ashore to meet Allan Bennett. He found him in the monastery of Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung, standing like a giant in his yellow robe beside his short Burmese brethren. Brother Iehi Aour had dropped the child's play of the Golden Dawn for the real life of the spirit. The Buddhist Sangha had claimed him; he was now the Bhikkhu Ananda Metteya and many did him reverence.

During Crowley's short stay at the monastery, he worked hard on a new poem, which appeared in due course under the title of *Ahab*, and at Hindustani, for he was to be the interpreter on the projected expedition with Eckenstein to the Himalayas. And Ananda Metteya was in a little hut half a mile away, meditating quietly.

If Perdurabo had achieved proficiency in yoga, Ananda Metteya had literally surpassed himself in the art. Food and water were quietly placed on the window ledge for the European *Bhik-khu*. One day, one of the Brethren came to Crowley and said that

for three days the food had not been taken in from the window ledge and there was no reply to his knocking.

Crowley hurried to investigate.

He opened the door of the bungalow and to his amazement saw Ananda Metteya hovering in the air at eye level. He no longer had any weight and in the draught from the open door he was being blown about like a dry leaf...

5 AGAINST CHOGO RI

CROWLEY and Eckenstein had been quite serious about going to the Himalayas and climbing K2, the culminating point of the Karakorams. In 1892, Eckenstein had almost caught a glimpse of K2, which is the name given to Chogo Ri, or Mount Godwin-Austin, on the Indian Survey map; for he was a member of Sir William Martin Conway's famous expedition. Eckenstein does not mention Conway in his account of his travels in this part of the world, *The Karakorams and Kashmir*, *An Account of a Journey*; nor does Conway mention Eckenstein in his, for these two men discovered, when they were on the verge of civilisation, that they did not like each other, and Eckenstein left the party and wandered home alone.

Upon his return to London from Mexico, Eckenstein began organising the expedition, keeping Crowley informed by letter. An agreement was drawn up between them, which Crowley prints in full in his autobiography but which boils down to these simple conditions: Eckenstein, to whom it was left to find some more climbers who could pay their way and make themselves otherwise useful, was to be the leader. Obedience to him must be unquestioned but if a climber thought that in carrying out his orders he might lose his life, he had the right to refuse. Disputes were to be decided by majority vote. No one was to purchase any articles without Eckenstein's knowledge and consent. Any interference with the natives' prejudices and beliefs was forbidden; and women were to be left strictly alone.

This agreement was only part of the eager correspondence between these two men contemplating an assault on a mighty and hitherto unattempted mountain in a distant country. K2 was then the highest mountain in the world accessible to Europeans, for Mount Everest lies on the border between Tibet and Nepal, two states at that time rigidly closed to Europeans. It was not until 1921 that the first climbing party obtained permission to approach Everest.

In March 1902, Crowley met the team at Delhi. Apart from himself and Oscar Eckenstein, it consisted of a 22-year-old Cambridge man, Guy Knowles, a 33-year-old Swiss doctor and mountaineer, J. Jacot Guillarmod, and two experienced Austrian

climbers, H. Pfannl and V. Wesseley, both thirty-one years of age.

Crowley was the second in command. He had paid £1,000 towards the expenses – or so he says in his autobiography.

Knowles, however, told me that Crowley never put down a penny and that most of the cost of the expedition was borne by him.

In Crowley's account of the climb, written eighteen years later, he summed up his companions in this way. Towards Eckenstein he expressed his usual affection: he was the noblest man Crowley had ever known, even on a mountain. Guy Knowles is rather damned with faint praise. Pfannl and Wesseley are abused for having no climbing experience apart from the Alps and for behaving as if they were still in the Tyrol. Wesseley is called a pig because he made Crowley feel sick by the way he ate on the glacier and because he had not sufficient imagination to fall ill—as everybody else had done. Both Austrians, then, are dismissed as 'undesirable aliens'. As for Jacot Guillarmod, who had been a doctor in the Swiss Army, 'he knew as little of mountains as he did of medicine.'

Across the north of India lies a range of mountains whose peaks are higher than anything in Europe, Africa, or the Americas. They are on a plateau of 12,000 to 18,000 feet – that is to say, they begin where the Alps leave off. In spite of many heroic attempts, their highest peaks remained unclimbed until recent years, the wilderness of snow and ice in which they lie is still largely unexplored, and their numerous mountains un-named.

It was into this part of the world that the Eckenstein-Crowley expedition made its way. They were not the first white men to be there. Sir William Martin (afterwards Lord) Conway had preceded them, and five years before him Sir Francis Younghusband – who, in 1904, settled a dispute between the British Government and the Tibetans with the help of an escort of 2,500 men – had seen K2 at close range.

Chogo Ri is concealed by satellite mountains. As Colonel Younghusband rounded the end of a spur and beheld for the first time its towering ice walls, he gasped with astonishment. It rises over 12,000 feet from the high tableland that supports it, to a total height of 28,250 feet. It was higher than anything that Younghusband had ever imagined; he thought it an absurd notion that anyone should attempt to climb it.

1 K2 was finally conquered by an Italian party, under Professor Desio, in 1954.

Two courageous, middle-aged Americans, Dr William Workman and his wife Fanny, had also been wandering about and climbing in this part of the Himalayas before Eckenstein, Crowley, Knowles, Guillarmod, Pfannl, and Wesseley appeared. And since the 1890s other parts of the Himalayas had been approached by mountaineers. But Eckenstein's party was the first to attempt an assault on K2.

The train brought them to Rawalpindi in the Punjab, where they descended with their three tons of baggage. The rest of the journey was on foot, by pony, and by a two-wheeled pony-drawn cart called an *ekka*, which Crowley described as a contraption like a hansom cab with the back knocked out and the driver on the floor, 'as might have been conceived by the man who invented the coracle'. Fifteen *ekkas* were engaged, and off they went. At the village of Tret, they were halted by a police inspector who arrived in a two-horse rattle-trap with instructions to detain Eckenstein. The following day, the Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi descended with an order from no less a person than the Viceroy himself forbidding Eckenstein to go on.

Eckenstein was escorted back to Rawalpindi, and the expedition, under the command of Crowley, pushed on to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. They were all bewildered and depressed. No one knew why Eckenstein had been arrested, for no explanation had been offered. Three weeks later their leader rejoined them; he had been released after having cornered Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, and demanded to know what he had against him. Curzon did not tell him – Eckenstein, at any rate, professed complete ignorance on the subject – but released him. There were, of course, rumours of his being a Prussian spy because of his name.

On 28 April, they left Srinagar with 170 native porters and Conway's map which Crowley found difficult to read or, as he ironically put it, to reconcile with nature. The *ekkas* were exchanged for *kiltas*, vase-like baskets which the coolies carried on their backs; and the ponies were returned to their owners. The terrain now before them was one of steep mountain passes and primitive rope bridges slung above ravines and rivers of mud. A doctor was a rare bird in those parts and they established a temporary clinic in every village they passed through. Dr Jacot Guillarmod's precise and rather dry account of the expedition, *Six Mois dans l'Himalaya*, is interspersed with details about rough-and-ready operations performed on the natives.

The scenery began to lose its vegetation; the marches grew

more arduous. 'The mountains are huge hideous heaps of shapeless drab. There is hardly one noble contour; there is no rest for the eye; there is no inspiration and no interest – nothing but a gnawing desire to be done with the day's dreary dragging,' wrote Crowley.

Between Srinagar and Skardo is a snow-bound pass called Zoji La, which divides Kashmir from Baltistan. Crowley said:

My duty was to see that the caravans crossed the comparatively short section of the pass which the men dreaded. So I spent most of the morning rushing backwards and forwards encouraging one, exhorting another, and giving a hand to a third. By the time the last man had come safely through the critical section, I was already tired; and when I started to follow, I found to my dismay that the Matayun side of the pass, instead of being steep, was a very low gradient indeed; and, so far from being free from snow, was covered deeply. The day being well advanced, the going was softer and more slushy all the time. Even the tracks made by the coolies had not made the way decently walkable. Faint with exhaustion, I dragged myself into camp at five o'clock at night, after thirteen hours' trudge during which I had hardly sat down.

Twenty more marches faced them before they would reach the Baltoro Glacier. In spite of a biting wind, the glare of the sun was very distressing. On one side, they were frozen, on the other, roasted. At Skardo they ran into a sandstorm which rose from the bed of the Indus and blotted out the view of the mountains.

The last link with civilisation – such as it was – was the village of Askoley where Eckenstein, ten years before, had left Sir W. M. Conway. Here a dispute broke out between Eckenstein and Crowley over the books Crowley was taking with him. It had been decided that, on these last stages of the journey, they should not carry more than forty pounds on their backs. Crowley was weighed down with poetry.

Eckenstein wanted me to leave behind my library. His theory of travelling in wild countries was that one should temporarily become an absolute savage; but my experience had already shown me that man shall not live by bread alone. I attributed the almost universal mental and moral instability of Europeans engaged in exploring to their lack of proper intellectual relaxation far more than to any irritations and hardships inseparable from physical conditions. Perfectly good friends became ready

to kill each other over a lump of sugar. I won't say that I couldn't have stood Baltoro Glacier in the absence of Milton and the rest but it is at least the case that Pfannl went actually mad, and Wesseley brooded on food to the point of stealing it.

Like Baudelaire, Crowley could go three days without bread but not one day without poetry. He stood firm; he told his leader that either he took his books with him or he left the expedition. Eckenstein gave way.

A caravan of 230 men, 18 sheep, 15 goats, and more than 20 chickens made its way into the wilderness, climbing steadily higher. The coolies came to Crowley, he said, and told him that they knew they would never return, but this they did not mind; it was Kismet.

The Baltoro Glacier is about thirty miles long and two miles wide, a rising field of debris and ice brought down from the mountains on either side. About twenty tributary glaciers feed the Baltoro and a muddy torrent, the Bralduh, rushes out from its snout and down the Biaho Valley to become one of the sources of the Indus.

On 8 June 1902, Crowley, with a large topaz ring on his finger, and twenty coolies, stood before this formidable moraine. They were at 11,580 feet; the ascent of K2 had begun. Pfannl and Wesseley, with eighty men, followed a day's march behind; and the rest of the party behind them.

Near the end of the Baltoro, at 15,500 feet, starts a tributary glacier which leads straight up to the mountain. Conway, who had stood at the foot of this glacier, called it Godwin-Austin, after the man who first surveyed the region. They were now entirely on the ice, where no white man had ever trodden before. On 16 June, K2 rose up magnificent before Crowley's advance party.

The poet of the expedition stared at it with only a practical eye, examining it through the drifting clouds with his binoculars, sketch-book in hand to draw the best line of approach. The matter-of-fact Dr Guillarmod, who sighted it two days later, was spellbound. 'At first, the fascination that it exercised on our minds was so great that, in spite of being accustomed to appreciate peaks at a glance, we were overwhelmed and paralysed. We stared at it dumbly, not being able to find a word to express the impression it made on us.'

Along the Baltoro they had been making their camps and moving up their stores. Crowley was at Camp VIII, half-way up

Glacier Godwin-Austin and only five miles from the formidable peak itself. He spent the whole day examining the King of the Karakorams through his glasses. The best approach to the summit, he concluded, was along the south-east ridge. Although he had not made a circuit of the mountain and seen what the ridges were like on the other sides, he had, nevertheless, fallen upon the best, if not the only possible, way up, as the American expeditions of 1938 and 1939 were to prove. The next day, he trudged on for three and a half hours, searching for a suitable spot for a main, or base, camp for the actual assault, until he was stopped by overhanging ice walls of incredible height. Here, at 17,332 feet, directly under the south face of the mountain, he set up camp IX.

The following morning, he climbed in a north-easterly direction, away from those unassailable ice walls. He covered a distance of about two miles, and ascended to 18,733 feet. The way to the summit seemed clear from where he was now, so on this spot he pitched Camp X. Eckenstein afterwards criticised him for selecting this exposed site to pitch a tent, to which Crowley sarcastically replied that he had not 'the slightest ground for supposing that we were likely to meet any conditions which would make Camp X other than a desirable residence for a gentleman in failing health'.

The rest of the party began slowly to arrive at Camp X. They had now come to the heart of the business. There was the mountain asking to be climbed and reaching out towards them with avalanches of snow, ice, and rock which, with each fall, blotted out the landscape in a fog of snow.

In the Himalayas, the blizzard-bearing winds from the high plains of Central Asia meet the monsoons from the Indian Ocean, turning the snow and ice into death traps for climbers. The aim, therefore, of mountaineering parties in the Himalayas is to rush the summit in the short period of the spring before the treacherous monsoons begin; or in the few weeks of the autumn before the whole of this part of the world is locked in ice.

Crowley, Pfannl, and Guillarmod, one of each of the three nationalities represented on the expedition, were to go first. While they were preparing for the ascent, the weather broke, and Eckenstein and Knowles fell ill with influenza. Two days later the wind dropped but it was still snowing. Then there was one fine day, followed immediately by a blizzard which tore up the end of Crowley's tent although it had a hundred-pound weight on it.

On 28 June the weather cleared. Everything was made ready

for Crowley, Pfannl, and Guillarmod to set off, but they awoke the next morning in a high wind which made climbing impossible and froze their fingers as they drank their coffee.

A day later, Crowley was down with snow-blindness; his eyes felt as if they had red-hot sand at the back of them. On 1 July, Pfannl and Wesseley went off reconnoitring and came back to report that the north-east ridge was definitely climbable. Against Crowley's advice, the main camp was moved round the mountain and up to 20,000 feet.

On 10 July, when a day of fine weather turned up again, Wesseley and Guillarmod set off and reached a height of 22,000 feet, which is 200 feet higher than the highest point reached seven years later by the Duke of Abruzzi, whose expedition to K2 is considered, erroneously, to be the first attempt ever made on this mountain.

This was the highest point reached. Upon their return to Camp XI, they found Crowley ill with malaria. His temperature was 103 degrees and he saw butterflies in the frozen air; he also saw Knowles in an unfavourable light and grabbed his Colt revolver. Knowles did not like Crowley, so when he saw him pointing a gun at him, he jumped at him. Crowley fell over from a short blow to the stomach and his gun, like the butterflies, flew away.

The continual bad weather was robbing them of their chance of climbing to the summit, or in fact of getting any higher. The July days were running out. Living at such a height is, in itself, difficult, for the atmospheric pressure is much lower. Two hours were spent making a pot of lukewarm tea, and the whole day in boiling some mutton.

The two Austrians went further northwards and established Camp XII at 21,000 feet. A few days later a coolie brought down a note saying that Pfannl was ill; he was spitting blood. Crowley said that Pfannl went insane and saw himself as three persons, one of whom was a mountain with a dagger threatening to stab him. Dr Guillarmod injected him with morphine.

The weather showed no signs of clearing. Reluctantly, they decided to abandon the climb. They had not succeeded in doing what they had set out to do, but they had achieved something. They were the first to attempt K2 and they had lived for longer than anyone had lived before at the remarkable height of 20,000 feet.

At the beginning of August, they retraced their steps down the glacier.

6 PRINCE AND PRINCESS CHIOA KHAN

In October 1902, Crowley embarked at Bombay for France, stopping on the way at Cairo. He did not go to see the Pyramids, but wallowed in the fleshpots of Shepheard's Hotel instead. He was not, he said, going to have forty centuries look down upon him.

Since leaving England he had been corresponding with a young painter, Gerald Kelly – now Sir Gerald Kelly, a former President of the Royal Academy. They had met during Crowley's last term at Trinity. A Cambridge bookseller, whom Crowley called 'the most nauseating hypocritical specimen of the pushing tradesman that I ever set eyes on' (was this abuse due to his having published *Aceldama*?), showed Kelly a copy of Crowley's first book. The concealment of the author's identity with a phrase which awakened memories of Shelley, and the epigraph from Swinburne, aroused Kelly's curiosity. Here is Crowley's choice from Swinburne:

I contemplate myself in that dim sphere Whose hollow centre I am standing at With burning eyes intent to penetrate The black circumference, and find out God,

Kelly inquired after this mysterious 'Gentleman of the University' and a meeting was arranged at Crowley's apartment at 37 Trinity Street.

The poet was good-looking, wore a great floppy bow-tie round his neck, and rings of semi-precious stones on his fingers, rings as strange and remote as their owner's gaze. His shirts were of pure silk, a little dirty, perhaps, at the cuffs and collar, but that only went with his manly air. He was a master of that esoteric game called chess, had played in two matches against Oxford and won his chess half-Blue. (Leaded Staunton chessmen were in their mahogany box upon a folding card-table which stood open, scattered with poker chips.) He was also a master of language, riposting with words of dry humour, and with scholarly ease capping one quotation with another.

An atmosphere of luxury and studiousness pervaded this apart-1 Sir Gerald Kelly died, aged 92, in January 1972. ment. Books covered the walls to the ceiling and filled four revolving walnut bookcases which stood on the floor. They were largely on science and philosophy, with a modest collection of Greek and Latin classics, and a sprinkling of French and Russian novels. On one shelf shone the black and gold of *The Arabian Nights* of Burton: below was the flat canvas and square label of the Kelmscott *Chaucer*. Valuable first editions of the British poets stood beside extravagantly bound volumes issued by Isidore Liseux. An early Rabelais in dull crimson morocco stamped with the arms of a Cardinal was next to John Payne's *Villon* in virginal white. Hard by stood the *Kabbalah Denudata* of Knorr von Rosenroth, its vellum rusty orange with age; it was, so to speak, the advance guard of an army of weird old books on alchemy and kindred subjects, such as the forged *Grimoire* of Pope Honorius, the *Enchiridion* of Leo the Third, the *Nuctemeron* of Apollonius.

Over the door hung an ice-axe with worn-down spike and ragged shaft, and in the corner was a canvas bag containing a salmon-rod.

The painter quickly grew to like the poet; the poet was soon kindled by the appreciation of the painter. They became warm friends and when term was over met in London where Kelly's father was the vicar of Camberwell.

While Crowley was in the Himalayas, Kelly had been serving his apprenticeship in Paris. Having business with Mathers in Paris, Crowley wrote to Kelly from Cairo and invited himself to stay with him.

Brother Perdurabo, laden with wisdom from the East, shook with excitement at the thought of his arrival at Mathers's door. Suddenly, in all his glory, he would appear. In a letter to Kelly he wrote of his impending descent upon the rue Saint-Vincent, in Montmartre (where Mathers had moved to) as his hour of Triumph. When, in the winter of 1899–1900, he had supported Mathers against the London lodge, he had been content to hold up Deo Duce Comite Ferro as his hero and submit to his will; now he acted as if he believed that Mathers was going to submit to his, Crowley's, will. It would have been easier for Crowley to walk calmly to the top of Chogo Ri.

The Hour of Triumph was celebrated only by Crowley himself, and not even by him to any great degree. Mathers greeted him in silence, quite unimpressed by the Himalayas, yoga, or the obtrud-

1 Crowley had some, but not all, of these books; the description is of his ideal, more than his actual library.

ing genius of the young man before him. What these two Brethren of the Golden Dawn said to each other, one can only try to guess. Crowley, who wrote in detail about most of the things that happened to him, passes over this matter as if it were too embarrassing to record.

Of course, the trouble with Mathers was that he was a Black Magician. Instead of conjuring up his Holy Guardian Angel he had only brought forth a Malignant Demon. Thus argued Crowley. And Mathers had stolen some of his things. Before going to Mexico, Crowley had left at the rue Saint-Vincent a dressing-case (worth fifty guineas) and when he asked for it back, Mathers only shook his head and denied ever having seen it.¹

The break between the two was inevitable. Mathers wanted only subordinates, and Crowley could not sit for long at the feet of any Master; he was too restless for that, as well as being rooted in an attitude of opposition to anyone in authority. In addition, he had made up his mind that he, and he alone, should be the Head of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn or, if not, of a higher order of his own making.

Feeling that he must strike at Crowley at once, Mathers called to his aid a certain female vampire, Mrs M., 'a middle-aged woman worn with strange lusts', who was modelling a sphinx preparatory to endowing it with life. She asked Crowley to tea and while passing the milk mesmerised him into a state of somnolence.

Presently a strange dreamy feeling seemed to come over me, and something velvet-soft and soothing and withal lecherous moved across my hand. Suddenly looking up I saw that Mrs M. had noiselessly quitted her seat and was bending over me; her hair was scattered in a mass of curls over her shoulder, and the tips of her fingers were touching the back of my hand. She was no longer the unattractive middle-aged woman but a young girl of bewitching beauty.

Frater Perdurabo withdrew his hand hurriedly and began making the politest of conversation. What exactly he said or did to Mrs M. he did not disclose, only the effect.

She writhed back from me, and then again approached me even more beautiful than she had been before. She was battling for

1 Crowley was always accusing those whom he had quarrelled with of stealing his possessions; towards the end of his life, it grew to be a mania.

her life now, and no longer for the blood of her victim. The odour of man seemed to fill her whole subtle form with feline agility. One step nearer and then she sprang at me and with an obscene word sought to press her scarlet lips to mine.

As she did so I caught and held her at arm's length and then smote the sorceress with her own current of evil. A blue-greenish light seemed to play round the head of the vampire, and then the flaxen hair turned the colour of muddy snow, and the fair skin wrinkled, and her eyes dulled and became as pewter dappled with the dregs of wine. The girl of twenty had gone; before me stood a hag of sixty. With dribbling curses she hobbled from the room.

What is absurd about this absurd account is that Crowley would have preferred the hag, especially as she was 'worn with strange lusts'; that was just his taste, as he says plainly enough, if you read between the lines.

Mrs M. is described as if she were an acquaintance of Gerald Kelly but Sir Gerald dismisses the whole story as pure invention.

Crowley paid his last visit to the rue Saint-Vincent at night. Jones was with him. They entered Mathers's house through the window to retrieve some ceremonial robes and other paraphernalia which Crowley had bought for the Order in 1900. Jones, in a letter to me, said that they checked each item against the original invoices.

Crowley was introduced by Kelly to a little circle of artists who gathered at a restaurant called *Le Chat Blanc* in the rue d'Odessa. There he met Auguste Rodin and Marcel Schwob. Schwob introduced him to Arnold Bennett and William Ernest Henley. He also made the acquaintance at *Le Chat Blanc* of a young English doctor who wished to make a career for himself as a writer, William Somerset Maugham.

To enhance his association with the great French sculptor, Crowley composed a series of short poems entitled *Rodin in Rhyme*, which Schwob translated into French. Rodin invited him to his studio at Meudon, and gave him ten sketches, seven of which are reproduced in *Rodin in Rhyme*. Schwob told Kelly that he had felt himself obliged to translate these sonnets but that he thought Crowley ridiculous and a bad poet.

Le Chat Blanc appears in the introduction to Crowley's Snow-drops from a Curate's Garden, which he wrote two years later -

'that witty and high-thinking informal club which met nightly at the restaurant *Au Chien Rouge*'. But it was left to Maugham to draw a picture of *Le Chat Blanc* and of Crowley in his novel, *The Magician*.

Sick of Paris, Crowley returned to Boleskine. There, on the shore of Loch Ness, he whiled away the time with a woman he had picked up in London. One day, bored, he wrote this letter to the secretary of the Vigilance Society, a kind of organisation for the suppression of vice.

Sir,

I am sorry to say that the prostitution in this neighbourhood is *most unpleasantly* conspicuous.

Perhaps you would inform me what steps (if any) I can take to abate this nuisance, which every day seems to me to grow more intolerable.

I would willingly spend a considerable amount.

I am, sir,

Yours very truly,

Aleister MacGregor

By return post, the secretary of the Society replied saying that he would send up an observer immediately. After a further exchange of letters and the passage of about a week came the disappointing report that their observer had not found prostitution to be especially conspicuous in the little town of Foyers. To which Aleister MacGregor, the Laird of Boleskine Manor, feeling that he had been shocked enough over this matter, replied on a post-card, 'Conspicuous by its absence, you fools!'

Staying with him, as a kind of bailiff, was L. C. R. Duncombe-Jewell, the eldest son of a Plymouth Brother who had disgraced himself by turning Roman Catholic. Duncombe-Jewell wore a kilt, called himself Ludovic Cameron and advised everyone to talk Gaelic, although he could not do so himself.

In July, finding himself without a 'companion-housekeeper' – the woman he had picked up in London having presumably fled – Crowley went to Edinburgh to look for one, and to fetch Kelly whom he had invited to Boleskine. He found a woman to his taste in 'Red-headed Arabella' but she was unable to come straight away.

Kelly had not been at Boleskine long when he received a letter from his mother, who had gone for a cure to Strathpeffer, twenty miles or so north of Foyers. Could he come over? She wanted to discuss something important with him. Enclosed with her letter was a note from his sister, Rose, saying that she was in a difficulty and he must help her. That same day, Kelly and Crowley left for Strathpeffer.

When Rose caught sight of her brother in the company of a magnificent creature in full Highland kit of the MacGregor tartan, she knew that he had brought with him the celebrated Aleister

Crowley. She rushed out to meet him.

After introducing his friend, Gerald disappeared with his mother to learn what the trouble was about. It turned out to be Rose's stupid flirting. She had married a man much older than herself. Now she was a widow and, to her chagrin, living again with her parents. It had been a disappointing marriage in every respect; she was doing her best to make up for it by flirting with every man she met. The previous year she had become engaged to a South African who had gone home to earn his fortune. Meanwhile she had become involved with an American, a Cambridge friend of her brother's and had promised to marry him as well. When a man fell in love with her and proposed, she had not the heart to refuse. Suitor number two had only to get his father to agree to the marriage. Unfortunately both men had succeeded in their missions and simultaneously sent cables to say they were returning to claim her. She loved neither of them. What on earth should she do?

Rose told Aleister about her plight as they strolled together over the golf links. And Brother Perdurabo, whose 'Shelleyan indignation' had been awakened by her story, and who never stopped to reflect, propounded a solution.

'Marry me,' he said.

He proceeded to tell her about his spiritual state and future plans, returning to her troubles half-way through a discourse on magic. 'Don't upset yourself about such a trifle. All you have to do is to marry me. I will go back to Boleskine, and you need never hear of me again.'

To sleep with every woman but not with his wife appealed to the logic of his emotions. He was twenty-eight years of age, and marriage was a card he had not yet played.

'By marrying me,' he explained, 'you will be free – free from your two fiancés, and free from me; for I will leave you to do what you like.'

And Rose agreed.

They felt the need to act quickly. That afternoon Crowley called at the local church but the only available authority was the gravedigger who informed him that they would have to have banns published and wait three weeks.

'Come, come,' said Crowley, 'there must be a simpler and quicker way of getting married than that.'

The sexton shook his head sorrowfully, a motion which Crowley checked by slipping a half-crown into his hand. The man then admitted that, according to the law of Scotland, it was only necessary to go to the Sheriff of the county and declare the intention of getting married and the marriage could take place there and then.

'There and then?' echoed Crowley in a hollow voice.

The next morning, before the rest of the party were awake, Rose and Aleister stole away in the grey of morning and caught the first train to Dingwall. They sat opposite each other in the carriage, silent and apprehensive.

At Dingwall, with the aid of a sleepy policeman, they found the Sheriff's house, but the maid who answered the door told them the Sheriff was still asleep. They explained the reason for their call, to which she replied that for that purpose any lawyer would do. So they roused a lawyer in the town, and at eight o'clock in the morning they were made man and wife, the ceremony concluding with Crowley's drawing his dagger from his stocking and solemnly kissing it.

At that moment, Gerald Kelly – who had had no difficulty in tracing the gaudily accourted Laird of Boleskine – burst into the room, pale with anger. Upon learning that he had arrived too late, he swore violently and aimed a blow at Crowley's head.

They parted on the pavement outside the lawyer's door. Crowley, according to the arrangement, went back to Boleskine, and Rose returned with Gerald to Strathpeffer.

Crowley's account of his quixotic marriage, like his writings in general is marred by his inflated view of the situation. He felt he had made a stir in the little towns of Strathpeffer and Dingwall, and he was filled with excitement. What, he asked himself, was to happen now? For Rose, he knew, was not going to be scared out of her marriage either by her brother, or her mother or by Mr Hill, the elderly solicitor who had accompanied Mrs Kelly to Scotland. Arriving home, he dispatched Ludovic Cameron to Strathpeffer to tell the Kellys that he was, in fact, legally married to Rose, and there was nothing they could do about it. 'It was,' said Crowley of his bailiff, 'the supreme moment of his life!'

The upshot of it was that Rose and Aleister had to go to Dingwall again and register their marriage with the Sheriff, according to the letter of the law. This was done amid excitement which, according to Crowley's unrestrained account, eclipsed the feelings aroused over the Relief of Mafeking. Mr and Mrs Aleister Crowley then went by train to the end of the local line and found themselves staying at a hotel on the west coast of Scotland. And after dinner, during which much champagne was drunk, Rose retired to the bedroom, while her spouse, bursting into poetry, covered the menu with a rondeau.

He then followed Rose upstairs. The suspicion was beginning to rise in his breast that he was in love with her and that his indifference had only been a subtle device to keep his mind on the Great Work,

They reached Boleskine – the laird had brought home his bride – and in the midst of the rejoicing, he learned that Red-headed Arabella was due to arrive the next day. He had completely forgotten about her. 'I blush to say', wrote Crowley, 'that I didn't know quite what to do about it, and confided in Duncombe-Jewell. He rose to the occasion, and went to Inverness to head her off. It may seem incredible, but my reaction was one of sheer annoyance. I had no feeling for Red-headed Arabella; in point of fact, I had picked her for that very reason.'

He felt the need to communicate something about his marriage to his mother, so he wrote her this letter.

I was sorry you would not come to the wedding – it was a very grand affair, plumed hearse and all, and the mutes recalled the delicious mutes of thirty years ago. The Rev. F. F. Kelly, the bride's father, preached such a beautiful sermon over the open grave. His text was from the 44th verse of the 44th chapter of Isaiah – 'And the Lord said unto Moses, and he arose and smote him'.' Thirty-six pipers played 'the voice that breathed o'er Eden' – some reference to Whistler whom her brother so much admires, I suppose – and as the earth was shovelled reverently by twelve stalwart professors of Esperanto, taxidermists and assorted Mormon missionaries (with such dear destroying angels) over the last mortal remains, a heartfelt sob of relief burst from the assembled multitudes, and tears of bitter joy streamed down, such profusion as to enable us to carry out

our nearly abandoned project of beginning the honeymoon in a canoe. This we did and shot Barnes Bridge¹ in the astonishing time of 2 h. 43 m. 21½ s. Thence to the seas of molten glory in the glowing west where we still are, c/o God, Heaven, will always find us.

Crowley hurled himself into totally irrational action; that was the pattern of his behaviour. On the surface he had married to help a poor girl out of a jam; within twenty-four hours, he felt himself slipping into love with her. A few days later he was being consumed by wild passion for her. During the three weeks that followed their runaway wedding, he was in an ecstasy of love and only once did he turn Rose up and wallop her. He explained that her love for him – she apparently started all this love business – evoked his love for her; and that, to begin with at least, he was carried away on the wings of her rapture. He soon discovered that he was married to 'one of the most beautiful and fascinating women in the world'. Towards the end of the summer he carried her off to Paris, the first stage of a honeymoon that they had planned for themselves in the East.

As he walked over the Pont Alexandre III with Rose on his arm, he met Moina Mathers. In spite of the break between them, they stopped for a moment to talk to each other; but in Crowley's eyes, Moina, the beautiful sister of the philosopher Henri Bergson (Maud Gonne MacBride, also a member of the Golden Dawn, told me that she was a lovely creature), was now only a prostitute, and a year after her death he published this spiteful account of her. 'I learnt that Mathers, falling upon evil times, had forced his wife to pose naked in one of the Montmartre shows which are put on for the benefit of ignorant and prurient people, especially provincials and English, and that even that was not the worst of it.'

He made up his quarrel with Gerald Kelly, to whom he wrote,

Thanks for your amusing note and enclosure. I felt at the time you were only bitter because you felt yourself wrong Letters intended for me find me more easily if addressed

Lord Boleskine

without further circumlocution or ambiguity. I am entitled to this address and I intend to assert it. 'Aleister Crowley' is of course a nom de plume now, and a name for literary use only.

1 The allusion is, of course, to the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race.

headed god of wisdom, Thoth.

The couple went to Marseilles and took the boat to Cairo. He persuaded Rose to spend a night with him in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid and help him invoke the ibis-

We reached the King's Chamber after dismissing the servants at the foot of the Grand Gallery. By the light of a single candle placed on the edge of the coffer I began to read the invocation. But as I went on I noticed that I was no longer stooping to hold the page near the light. I was standing erect. Yet the manuscript was not less but more legible. Looking about me, I saw that the King's Chamber was glowing with a soft light which I immediately recognized as the astral light The King's Chamber was aglow as if with the brightest tropical moonlight. The pitiful dirty yellow flame of the candle was like a blasphemy, and I put it out. The astral light remained during the whole of the invocation and for some time afterwards, though it lessened in

From Cairo they went to Ceylon where the daytime was spent hunting in the forest. As soon as Crowley laid down his rifle, he took up his pen. It was while he was with Rose in Ceylon that he wrote *Rosa Mundi*, Rose of the World. Strongly influenced by Shelley, this was the poem which so impressed Charles Richard Cammell, who called it one of the great love lyrics in the language, 'admitted by all connoisseurs of poetry not stupidly prejudiced against the author'.¹

intensity as we composed ourselves to sleep.

Rose of the World!
Red glory of the secret heart of love!
Red flame, rose red, most subtly curled
Into its own infinite flower, all flowers above!
Its flower in its own perfumed passion.
Its faint sweet passion, folded and furled
In flower fashion;
And my deep spirit taking its pure part
Of that voluptuous heart
Of hidden happiness!

On one expedition through the wilds of Ceylon, they pitched camp near a lake. In the shallow waters at the edge were large

1 Aleister Crowley, the Man: the Mage: the Poet, The Richards Press, 1951.

trees the branches of which were festooned with flying foxes, a species of large bat whose breast is furred with red and white. Crowley decided to kill a few of these animals and make of their skins a toque for Rose and a waistcoat for himself. They went out in a punt to catch them asleep. The flying foxes kept no guard, but they all awoke at the sound of the first shot and the sky became dark with them. Crowley kept firing away until one of the creatures fell wounded right on to Rose, its claws catching in her hair.

This adventure or mishap had an occult sequence. In the middle of the night Crowley was awakened by a horrible squeal like that of a dying bat – they had retired to a kind of bungalow provided for wanderers in this part of the world, and thrown themselves on to beds surrounded by a stout framework for mosquito nets. He called to Rose; as she did not reply but the squealing continued, he leapt out of bed and lit the candle.

There was Rose, stark naked, hanging to the bed frame by her arms and legs, insanely yawling. It was quite a job to pull her down. She clung on desperately, squealing all the time. When Crowley managed at last to detach her, she scratched and bit and scratched... exactly as the dying bat had done to her.

Crowley, with clinical thoroughness, described her condition as the 'finest case of obsession that I had ever had the good fortune to observe. Of course, it is easy to explain that in her hypersensitive condition the incident of the day had reproduced itself in a dream. She had identified herself with her assailant, and mimicked his behaviour.'

The condition that he referred to was her pregnancy.

In January 1904, they decided to go back to Europe; they had planned to call on Allan Bennett at Rangoon but the gods had decided differently. They could no more have got to Rangoon than to the moon, said Crowley; for the event which he called the greatest in his whole life, the sole reason for his having been born, was about to take place.

At the time Crowley had no foreknowledge of it, only a vague sense of destiny which was turning him round and sending him back to Egypt.

In Cairo, Count Svareff, or Aleister MacGregor, was subtly metamorphosed into Prince Chioa Khan; he wore a turban with a diamond aigrette, a robe of silk, and a coat of cloth of gold. With Princess Chioa Khan, formerly Mrs Aleister Crowley, he was

driven about the streets, 'a jewelled talwar¹ by my side, and two gorgeous runners to clear the way for my carriage'. In case anyone should doubt him, Crowley had a notice printed to the effect that some Eastern potentate had raised him to this rank. He sent a copy of this notice to Rose's parents with a letter pointing out that Prince Chioa Khan would not allow any communication to reach his wife that was improperly addressed. Rose's father, the vicar of Camberwell, a typical Victorian figure, shrugged his shoulders at this latest piece of vulgarity from his son-in-law. He thought Crowley a cad and his poetry 'windy stuff', but his wife obediently addressed her letters to her daughter as instructed. On one occasion she added an exclamation mark; and for this piece of impertinence her letter was returned to her, in a registered envelope, unopened.

1 Talwar or tulward, an Indian sword.

7 AIWASS, THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

ALTHOUGH Mathers, according to Crowley, had succumbed to the malevolent demons evoked by the operation of Abra-Melin, and had, therefore, lost contact with the Secret Chiefs, Perdurabo himself had as yet made no contact at all with them. And without them he could set up no Order of any consequence. He must sooner or later go on to establish his own link with the gods or abandon magic altogether.

On 14 March, Prince and Princess Chioa Khan moved to a flat in a corner house near the Boulak Museum.¹ Crowley turned the room facing north into a temple and once more took up magical ceremonies, invoking Thoth, IAO.²

Rose was in a strange state of mind, like someone dazed. She was either drunk or hysterical from pregnancy, he said. She kept repeating dreamily, 'They are waiting for you'. On 18 March, she came out with the astounding statement that 'He who was waiting was Horus', and that Aleister had offended him, and ought to invoke him and beg his pardon.

'Who is Horus?' asked Crowley. Rose knew nothing of Egyptology. On her lips the name of Horus was most perplexing. For an answer she took him into the museum nearby, a museum which, Crowley points out, they had not previously visited. They passed by several statues of Horus and went upstairs. In the distance was a glass case, too far off for its contents to be recognised.

'There,' cried Rose, pointing, 'there He is!'

Perdurabo advanced to the case. There was the image of Horus in the form of Ra-Hoor-Khuit painted upon a wooden stele of the 26th dynasty.

Suddenly Crowley fell back in amazement: the exhibit bore the number 666. His number, the number of the Beast!

The temple in the flat of Prince Chioa Khan reverberated with the sound of prayer, as a white-robed, bare-footed, bejewelled figure

1 The Boulak Museum no longer exists; ts antiquities have been transferred to the National Museum, Cairo.

2 Jehovah, the creative principle; or the initials of Isis, Apophis, Osiris.

loudly invoked the Egyptian god Horus, according to the instructions of Ouarda the Seeress, as Crowley now called his wife – Ouarda being the Arabic for Rose. A bowl of bull's blood and a sword lay on the altar before the supplicant.

How shall I humble myself enough before Thee? Thou art mighty and unconquered Lord of the Universe; I am a spark of Thine unutterable Radiance.

How should I approach Thee? but Thou art Everywhere.

But Thou has graciously deigned to call me unto Thee, to this Exorcism of Art, that I may be Thy Servant, Thine Adept, O Bright One, O Sun of Glory! Thou hast called me – should I not then hasten to Thy Presence?

With unwashen hands therefore I come unto Thee, and I lament my wandering from Thee – but Thou knowest!

Yea, I have done evil!

I bow my neck before Thee; and as once Thy sword was upon it so am I in Thy hands. Strike if Thou wilt: spare if Thou wilt: but accept me as I am.

The voice of the adept, Perdurabo, who had wandered solitarily about the world, seeking for a sign and word, rose to a shout:

Strike, strike the master chord! Draw, draw the Flaming Sword! Crowned Child and Conquering Lord, Horus, avenger!

In this City of the Pyramids, the ancient home of magic, a solitary voice in a strange, un-Egyptian tongue prayed again after thousands of years to the falcon-headed god, Horus.

Therefore I say unto thee: Come Thou forth and dwell in me; so that every Spirit, whether of the Firmament, or of the Ether, or of the Earth or under the Earth; on dry land or in the Water, or Whirling Air or of Rushing Fire; and every spell and scourge of God the Vast One may be THOU. Abrahadabra!

The invocation was an undoubted success, for Brother Perdurabo received the message (through Ouarda the Seeress) that 'the Equinox of the Gods had come'. In plainer language, that a new Epoch had begun for mankind and that Aleister Crowley had been chosen to initiate it.

Ever since his first experiments with Abra-Melin magic in his

oratory at Boleskine, Crowley had been seeking acquaintance and conversation with his Holy Guardian Angel. Now, at last, he appeared, firstly to Ouarda the Seeress, instructing her to tell her husband to invoke Horus and to go into the temple and write down what he would hear. His name was Aiwass and he was a Secret Chief (of the Grade of Ipsissimus).

Rather impressed with Rose, Crowley did what she bade. On 8 April 1904, at exactly twelve noon, he entered the temple, his Swan fountain pen in his hand; he sat at his desk with sheets of paper before him and waited for something to happen.

Suddenly a voice began to speak; it came over his left shoulder, from the furthest corner of the room.

'Had!1 The manifestation of Nuit.

'The unveiling of the company of heaven.'

Perdurabo began at once to write as the voice, 'deep timbre, musical and expressive, its tones solemn, voluptuous, tender, fierce or aught else as suited the mood' uttered its significant message for all mankind.

'Help me, O warrior lord of Thebes, in my unveiling before the Children of men!'

Crowley wrote steadily for an hour; then at 1.00 pm, after the 66th verse – 'To me! To me! The Manifestation of Nuit is at an end' – Aiwass vanished and Crowley laid down his pen.

The following day, again at exactly twelve noon, Perdurabo entered the temple. With similar European punctuality, Aiwass appeared and began dictating chapter two.

We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world. Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die; verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain pure ecstasy for ever. Nuit! Hadit! Ra-Hoor-Khuit! The Sun, Strength & Sight, Light; these are for the servants of the Star and the Snake.

The same procedure was followed on the third day, when Aiwass's message was completed.

Crowley was tempted to look over his shoulder and catch a glimpse of his Holy Guardian Angel. Apparently, he did so, for

1 Hadit (Behdety), another name of the great celestial Horus, whose glyph is the winged solar disc.

he said that Aiwass was suspended in a kind of cloud, and 'seemed to be a tall, dark man in his thirties, well knit, active and strong, with the face of a savage king, and eyes veiled lest their gaze should destroy what they saw.' Although Crowley hardly knew it at the time, he had caught a glimpse of the Devil. Aiwass (or Aiwaz) was the messenger of Hoor-Paar-Kraat, that is to say of Set, the destroyer god, the brother and murderer of Osiris. Set was also called Shaitan, and Shaitan is the prototype of the Christian Satan. And Crowley had seen Set or Shaitan or Satan because the word of the god (transmitted in this case by Aiwass) is the same as the god himself. Later he was in no doubt as to the nature of Aiwass, his so-called Holy Guardian Angel. Hence: 'And Her [the Scarlet Woman's] Concoction shall be sweet in our mixed mouths, the Sacrament that giveth thanks to Aiwaz, our Lord God the Devil . . .' (The Magical Record, 22 July 1920.)

The Book of the Law or Liber Legis, as the communication from Aiwass is called, is a series of dithyrambic verses with more exclamation marks than any other work of similar length. It deals with subjects which were Crowley's preoccupations, and it is written in his unmistakable style. It also presents his favourite characters from the Bible and quotes from the prose author whom he regarded as a high initiate, François Rabelais.

'Abrogate are all rituals, all ordeals, all words and signs,' is one verse. That is to say, drop ceremonial magic as taught in the Golden Dawn, and take up sexual magic as taught by the *Vamacharis* or followers of the left-hand path (because their worship is with women who are lunar or of the left). Crowley had heard in India about this form of worship, in which men and women are sexually united for a higher purpose; but at this stage of his career he had no actual knowledge of *Maithuna* and the details of its ritual, such as the use of sexual fluids as a sacrament. He knew, however, that he was going in that direction; the mere thought of it, of sex for magical purposes, aroused his enthusiasm.

'Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between one thing & any other thing; for thereby cometh hurt.'

That is to say, remain in a state of unconsciousness, for to be conscious is to make distinctions. Consciousness is differentiation.

'To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof!'

'There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.' Again, 'The word of the Law is $\theta \dot{\epsilon} \lambda \eta \mu a$ ' – Thelema ('Will'), the name of the district in which Rabelais set his wondrous abbey.

'Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.'

Crowley himself did not need any exhortation from the gods or from Aiwass, who was totally lacking in moral feeling, to lust and enjoy all things of sense; he had been doing this, in defiance of his parents, and the society in which he had been brought up, since he was a schoolboy.

'Every man and every woman is a star.' But only if he finds his true will, otherwise he is a slave; and 'the slaves shall serve'. There is no democracy in *The Book of the Law* and no Christian charity either. Aiwass seems to have been strongly influenced by Nietzsche.

The Book of the Law falls into expressions of childish rage.

'Mercy let be off: damn them who pity! Kill and torture; spare not; be upon them!'

'Choose ye an island. Fortify it! Dung it about with enginery of war!'

Then it picks itself up with remarks which have some meaning, such as 'Put on wings, and arouse the coiled splendour within you: come unto me!' The 'coiled splendour' is the serpent of Kundalini, coiled and asleep at the base of the spine but aroused by Yoga.

'Now ye shall know that the chosen priest & apostle of infinite space is the prince-priest the Beast . . .' In other words, the man Aleister Crowley was the avatar (or god in human form) of these cosmic forces which are coming into being. He was the vehicle through which the communication was made.

The emphasis of the New Aeon (of Horus, the ever-coming Child) is on the fact that god is within, not without – there is no god – and that the soul or centre in man is the True Will. Hence, 'Do what thou wilt'. In *The Book of the Law*, which is the pantacle of the Aeon, i.e. it contains all its spells and instructions, Crowley had created a religion which fitted him perfectly.

The Book of the Law lacks the numinosity or authority of prophetic writings; and its rebellious sentiments exude an atmosphere incompatible with the 'praeter-human intelligence' which Aiwass was supposed to be.

One cannot think of the phrase *Do what thou wilt* without being reminded of Rabelais's memorable *Fay ce que vouldras*, but whereas the merry doctor's 'Do what thou wilt' was an anticlerical gibe and a free-flung jest to cabined mankind, Aiwass's exhortation was pronounced with all solemnity. One must do what one wills, not for the fun of it, but to bring oneself into line with the imma-

nent meaning of life. (The will in Crowley's system is the Horus or sun centre.) But is there any reason to believe that Aiwass had read Rabelais? Or was this phrase from his dictation, and the rest of it, only the stirrings of Crowley's unconscious and conscious mind?

There is a lot of foreboding prophecy in *Liber Legis*: 'Another prophet shall arise, and bring fresh fever from the skies: another woman shall awake the lust and worship of the Snake: another soul of God and beast shall mingle in the globèd priest; another sacrifice shall stain the tomb...'

A new aeon had begun, and all beginnings of new aeons, or epochs, are invariably stained with blood. The world war was, of course, predicted.

Commented Crowley:

The first important result of the new revelation was the information from the Secret Chiefs that the New Aeon implied the breaking up of the civilisation existing at the time. The nature of Horus being 'Force and Fire', his Aeon should be marked by the collapse of humanitarianism. The first act of His reign would naturally be to plunge the world into the catastrophe of a huge and ruthless war.

After the assistant curator of the Cairo Museum had translated the writing on the stele of the Priest Ankh-f-n-Khonsu (exhibit 666), and a local painter had made a facsimile of it, Prince and Princess Chioa Khan departed for Europe.

The immediate upshot of his encounter with Aiwass, which afterwards came to be known as the Great Revelation in Cairo, was that Crowley sat down and wrote a formal letter to Mathers, informing him that the Secret Chiefs had appointed him visible Head of the Order, and declared a new Magical Formula – thelema. 'I did not expect or receive an answer,' said Crowley. 'And I declared war on Mathers accordingly.'

8 KANGCHENJUNGA, THE FIVE SACRED PEAKS

CROWLEY did not at once realize the significance of *The Book of the Law*. For some years to come he fought against it by ignoring it, even mislaying the precious manuscript; then, irresistibly, its tremendous meaning forced itself upon him.

Before he left Cairo he threw it into a case, with his copy of the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu and the rest of his literary possessions, and returned to Europe wearing a heavily jewelled red waistcoat and the largest ring that Arnold Bennett had ever seen on any hand. We know about this splendid waistcoat and this outsize ring because Bennett recorded them in his *Journal* on 22 April 1904 and made use of them and their owner for one of his characters in *Paris Nights*.

Upon arriving in Paris, Crowley sent Bennett a telegram, asking him to lunch at Paillard's. He did not mention *Liber Legis*; instead he talked to Bennett about his elevation to the Persian nobility.

With steady persistence, he had produced further volumes of poetry. Kegan Paul, and Watts had published him, and the Chiswick Press and other printers had been employed to make some of his private editions. Most of Crowley's books were privately published. He chose the type face, the paper and binding (the most expensive); then he, or one of his pupils, footed the bill. Years later, most of the volumes were still on his hands, for poetry is normally difficult to sell.

Between writing White Stains, 1898, and Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden, 1903, two books eagerly sought after because they are exceedingly filthy, he brought out seventeen works, mainly verse, all beautifully produced and of little interest to the public.

The Sword of Song, 1904, The Argonauts, 1904, The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King, 1904, Oracles, 1905, Orpheus, 1905, Gargoyles, 1906, and Konx Om Pax, 1907, were published under his own imprint and from his own doorstep; for, upon his return to Scotland from abroad, the Society for the Propagation of

1 'Light in Extension,' i.e. the alchemical light of consciousness, projected into the darkness of matter.

Religious Truth, as he called his publishing house, was established, with headquarters at Boleskine, Foyers, Inverness. *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King* was neither written nor translated by him but by MacGregor Mathers; hence the insult to the translator in the sub-title, 'translated into the English Tongue by a Dead Hand...'

He had such a large body of verse in print that he conceived the idea, after Max Beerbohm, who had published in one volume his 'Works' at the age of twenty-four, of bringing out his *Collected Works*. But, unlike Beerbohm, Crowley at the age of thirty required three volumes for his abundant writings.

He described his life with Rose from the time of their marriage until the appearance of Aiwass, as 'an uninterrupted sexual debauch'. Now they found other things to do. In the third and last chapter of *The Book of the Law* instructions are given for the making of Cakes of Light, a Crowleian parody of the consecrated bread of Holy Communion, 'to breed lust and the power of lust'; it is part of the worship of Horus, the name given to the current of the New Aeon which has succeeded the old aeon of Christianity, Buddhism and other religions.

The best blood is of the moon, monthly; then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven; then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers; last of some beast, no matter what. This burn: of this make cakes and eat unto me. This hath also another use; let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfumes of your orison.

Soon afterwards, Crowley found a beetle on the bathroom floor. It measured one and a half inches in length and had 'a solitary horn which ended in its eyeball'. During the two following weeks the whole house and garden were plagued with these insects. He sent one to the Natural History Museum in London for identification; it was politely returned with a note saying that the species was unknown. Crowley was delighted for in *The Book of the Law* it is written, '... it [the Cakes] shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred unto me.' But *Liber Legis* was still an enigma to him.

MacGregor Mathers did reply to Crowley's announcement about Aiwass and the New Aeon: he mounted a magical attack, employing Abra-Melin demons. Crowley's pack of bloodhounds fell dead in their tracks; then his servant went mad and tried to kill Rose. (Aleister overpowered him with a salmon gaff and threw

him into the cellar; he was led away by the police and Crowley never heard of him again.)

Crowley replied by evoking Goetic forces, the forty-nine servitors of Beelzebub, who proceeded to blast Mathers in his Montmartre abode. Rose, whose clairvoyante gift enabled her to see them, described them all, and Crowley included an account of some of them in *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*, otherwise known by its Persian title of *Bagh-I-Muattar*. Here are two of them:

'NIMORUP: A stunted dwarf with large head and ears. His lips are greeny-bronze and slobbery.

'NOMINON: A large red spongy jellyfish with one greenish luminous spot, like a nasty mess.'

Beelzebub broke Mathers's power in the magical hierarchy; he was to live for another thirteen years but he performed no major magical work and published nothing more of note.

Crowley had invited a physician called Percival Bott to come to stay with him and hold himself ready for Rose's confinement; also Gerald Kelly, and a friend of their Cambridge days, Ivor Back. Back was one of the youthful company of wits at *Le Chat Blanc*; later, he became a distinguished surgeon at St George's Hospital in London.

They were three good friends, Crowley, Kelly, and Back. Crowley, the oldest, the boldest, and wittiest, kept the table in an uproar of mirth. He taught Bott and Back to climb, leading them upon the cliffs around Boleskine. To Back, the young surgeon, he gave spontaneous examples of the kind of medical book that would make medicine less dull. It should be in verse, thus:

General paralysis
Of the insane
Baffles analysis:
Treatment is vain.
Never more rallies his
System or brain.

While Bott delivered Rose of a daughter, Back, in his capacity of editor of *The Collected Works of Aleister Crowley*, was bringing the first volume to birth. And Crowley, in the adjoining room was consecrating a talisman to make Rose produce a monster. An apocryphal story but that was the sort of thing people were beginning to say about him. If it was true, his magic failed for the child

was quite normal, and within a few days Crowley, like any other father, was delighted. He carefully thought out these names for her: Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith.

Nuit was chosen 'in honour of Our Mistress of the Stars'; she is the Egyptian goddess of the sky, and in the new religion of Horus or Crowleyanity, she takes the place of the Holy Virgin. Ma or Maat, the Egyptian goddess of Truth and Justice, was chosen because Libra, the balance, was in the ascendant in the child's horoscope. Ahathoor, the goddess of Love and Beauty, because Venus governs Libra. He could not remember why he had chosen Hecate, but thought that it might have been an expression of politeness towards the gods of hell. And he could hardly help doing honour to the only woman poet, Sappho. Jezebel was still his favourite character from the Bible, and Lilith retained his affection in the realm of demons.

They made a jolly party in the highlands. Crowley's aunt, Annie, the only female member of his family whom he could tolerate, was running the house. They went fishing, shooting, and climbing, and at night played billiards and emptied the laird's wine cellar.

There was only one problem, that of keeping Rose amused during her convalescence. She could not play even the simplest game of cards and there were only half a dozen books that she cared to read among the 3,000 volumes in her husband's library. Aleister decided that it was up to him to write a book for her, a book which she would not only understand but enjoy. For a reason best known to him, he decided that the most suitable book for Rose was a pornographic one.

Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden, a work which aims to succeed by the method of irony, begins with a brief account of the life of the imaginary author, K. An unnamed editor, who stole the manuscript, informs us that K. 'was born about the year 1860 in a hunting shire of England. His parents were of that lesser class of country magnate which does not care to make any great show. They had enough self-respect to live the life of their choice.' In other words, they were not rich enough to make a great show.

The youth is delicate and pious, adored by his tutors for his learning; he takes Holy Orders and obtains a valuable private chaplaincy in Paris where his ministrations to the poor are the wonder of the whole French capital. He has plenty of leisure and composes 'a delicious volume of hymns'. His evenings are spent amid the brilliant artists at the restaurant *Au Chien Rouge*. He is

very chaste and gives himself only to 'a boat-captain on a Seine steamer'. He marries a young and beautiful English girl; they spend, like Aleister and Rose, their honeymoon in Cairo; he takes her to 'the infamous T—Club where the dissolute officers of the Army of Occupation, merchants, fish porters, pimps, all the cream of Egyptian society gathered every Wednesday night to commit appalling orgies.' K. is in the forefront of this company, and watches his wife being 'violated a dozen times . . .'

After the biography of the author of the work, comes the work itself, the 'snowdrops'. Firstly, there is a short picaresque novel about an archbishop, in which Crowley tries to outdo the Marquis de Sade. Secondly, there is a collection of obscene poems and parodies, among which is *Rosa Mystica*, an ode about Rose which is as mystical as the author, K., is pious; it should be read alongside the four better known odes to Rose in any consideration of Crowley's love for his wife. It is too indelicate to quote. However:

TO PE OR NOT TO PE

KING O heavy burden!
POLONIUS Hold on, I'm coming: I'll withdraw, my lord.
(Enter Hamlet.)

HAMLET To pe or not to pe: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous stricture Or to take arms against a closed urethra And by abscission, end it? To fuck; to come: No more; and, by a come to say we end The cockstand and the thousand natural lusts That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation Devoutly to be wished. To fuck: to come: To come, perchance to clap! Ay, there's the rub. For from that come of fuck what clap may catch When we have shuffled off this mortal stand Must give us pause. There's the chordee1 That makes calamity of so wet dreams! For who would bear the jerks and drops of piss, The pisspot's wrong, the bladder's contumely, The pangs of prostate gland, the pe's delay, The insolence of orchitis, and the spurns

1 Chordee. A painful inflammatory downward curving of the penis. (O.E.D.)

That patient merit of the urethra takes When he himself might his quietus make With a greased catheter. Who would sandal1 swill To fart and shit under a potent purge But that the dread of something after gleet.2 The senile stricture from whose imminence No catheter gives 'scape, puzzles the will, And makes us rather bear the ills we have Than fly to others that we know not of. Thus chordee doth make cowards of us all! And thus the native need of urination Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought And enterprises of great piss and po, meant With this regard, their currents corkscrew turn And lose the name of pumpship. Soft you now! The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons Be all my sins remembered.

Crowley's own opinion on *Snowdrops* is contained in a letter which he wrote twenty years later to one of his followers, Norman Mudd. Mudd had tried to bring into England from Sicily some boxes of Crowley's manuscripts and paintings, and an album of obscene photographs, but had failed to get them through the Dover Customs authorities who destroyed them. 'It is imperative to take the view that these things, whatever they are, are simply the appurtenances of a surgical operation,' instructed Crowley in a vain endeavour to save his property. 'My whole plan is to clean all germs out of the sexual wound. To some extent I developed this thesis in my account of *Snowdrops* in the Hag.³ My object is not merely to disgust but to root out ruthlessly the sense of sin.'

He spent the winter with Rose in St Moritz, skating and ski-ing, and returned to England when the thaw set in, laden with more poetic compositions, all of which were published in due course. He was feeling unusually elated. Not since the Great Gate of Trinity had admitted him ten years before had he felt so happy. He was a recognised poet (G. K. Chesterton had described him in a review as 'a good poet') and a magician: he was growing in stature; there was no limit to his expectations.

Clifford Bax, who later was also inspired by the Buddhist monk

Allan Bennett, has left us a picture of Crowley at this time; they were staying at the same hotel in St Moritz.

A powerful man, with black magnetic eyes, walked up to me. He wore a velvet coat with ermine lapels, a coloured waistcoat, silk knee-breeches, and black silk stockings. He smoked a colossal meerschaum. . . . Every evening we played chess together and to play chess with a man is to realize the voltage of his intellect. A strong and imaginative mind directed the pieces that opposed me. Moreover, he was an expert skater, an expert mountaineer; and in conversation he exhibited a wide knowledge of literature, of occultism, and of Oriental peoples. I am certain, too, that with a part of his personality he did believe in his Messianic mission. On the eve of my return to England, after we had played the last of our chess-games, he exhorted me to devote myself to the study and practice of magic. I understood that he would instruct me. 'Most good of you,' I stammered, 'but really, you know - perhaps I am not quite ready. I must read a little more first.' 'Reading,' he answered, 'is for infants. Men must experiment. Seize what the gods have offered. Reject me, and you will become indistinguishable from all these idiots around us.' He paused, and then asked abruptly, 'What is the date?' 'January 23rd,' I answered. 'What is the year - according to the Christian calendar?' 'Nineteen hundred and five.' 'Exactly,' said Crowley, 'and in a thousand years from this moment, the world will be sitting in the sunset of Crowleyanity.'

Surely Crowley said, or meant, 'sunshine'; for he expected his new Order to last two thousand years at least, the span, so far, of Christianity. In a thousand years' time, the world would be basking in the new religion, of which he was the prophet, not beginning to shiver in its twilight.

According to *The Book of the Law*, there have been so far two great periods or aeons in the history of mankind. The first is that of the woman; hence matriarchy, the worship of the Great Mother. Crowley arbitrarily gives the name of the Egyptian goddess, Isis, to this aeon.

The next aeon, that of the man, the father, also carries the name of an Egyptian god, Osiris; it is the aeon of Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism, religions of suffering and death, of 'the dying god', a notion which Crowley took from the author of *The Golden Bough*. In other words, the religion of his

¹ Sandal. An ointment made of powdered sandalwood. (O.E.D.)

² Gleet. A morbid discharge from the urethra. (O.E.D.)

³ The Confessions or 'Autohagiography'.

parents whom he hated and blamed for the suffering of his child-hood.

The new aeon, which J. F. C. Fuller called Crowleyanity, is named after Horus, the child of Isis and Osiris. The emphasis during this period is on the true will; hence Crowley's battle-cry of 'Do what thou wilt'. During this age, men will themselves become gods or, at least, those of them who have discovered their true wills, as he had discovered his. 'Death is forbidden, o man, unto thee,' says *The Book of the Law*. It is Crowley's answer to Plymouthism.

Upon his return to Boleskine, Crowley resumed the life of a Scottish nobleman. Gerald Kelly, Mrs Kelly (Crowley's mother-in-law), Ivor Back, and Eckenstein came to stay with him; also an Indian Army doctor, Lieutenant-Colonel Gormley, whom Crowley described as a masochist. 'Gormley claimed to have been flagellated by over two thousand women . . . it seems a very large number.'

On 27 April, Dr Jacot Guillarmod arrived with a copy of a book he had published in Switzerland on the expedition to K2, Six Mois dans l'Himalaya.

Crowley was still in a happy mood. The staid Swiss doctor was the butt of the funniest of his pranks which is best kept in Crowley's own words.

It was the Spring of 1905 when I was surprised by a visit from the doctor – a Swiss Army doctor. He associated the Highlands with grouse shooting, and apart from the fact, which I have never been able to explain, that a grouse has never been seen on my property – though they abound on the other side of Strath-Errick – he insisted on being taken out to shoot grouse, and apart from the slight difficulty mentioned above, it was rather a shame that he should have failed to realize that grouse in April was tabu.

He was, in fact, very disgruntled. Of course, it was up to me to provide him with what entertainment I could afford, and I said to myself: 'All right! You've asked for it, you shall get it.'

A day or so later I led the conversation in the direction of Burma. When the English soldiery were rounding up dacoits in that country they drove most of the buffalo away from the villages and these tame buffalo in the course of a generation or two had become wild. They became almost a separate species with their own habits. Curiously enough, I continued, there is a

somewhat similar sport of Nature in this part of the world. When General Wade was devastating the Highlands, he drove the sheep of the peaceful villagers on to the tractless moors, and exactly the same thing happened as did to the Water Buffalo in Burma. This breed of sheep is very shy indeed and very rare, but of course a miracle might happen; one might stray on to my property and then Oh Boy!

The good doctor got quite excited about this fiction. I, on my side, got quietly to work. It was only three or four days later when my Ghillie rushed into the gun-room where we were playing billiards in a rather desultory fashion and cried: 'There's a haggis on the hill, m'lord.'

I dropped my cue like a shot and dashed to the gun-case, gave the doctor my double .577 Express, while I contented myself with a Holland's 10 bore Paradox. It was not five minutes before the stalk began in earnest.

It was pouring with rain as usual, but nevertheless I insisted on the party wading through the trout pond so as to lay the scent, whatever that might mean. But the doctor took it all in as part of the day's work.

Crawling yard by yard on hands and knees up the little track that leads beside the waterfall to the duck pond, we made our wet and squelchy way with infinite care. The only risk of detection was due to my wife who brought up the rear of the party, for she could hardly contain her emotions.

Well, ultimately we reached the top and with even more than redoubled precautions we approached the spot where the good Ghillie had found the haggis.

It was needless to say an unusually thick mist, but presently looming through the gusts we saw the gigantic figure of the haggis. We lay dead still. Then Hugh Ghillie cautiously beckoned the doctor to crawl forward, and I suppose he was not more than twenty yards away when he let loose and blew the major part to pieces of . . . Farmer McNab's prize ram.

Hugh Ghillie dashed forward because it would never have done for the doctor to see the oats which he had left lying about so as to keep the haggis in the same position. He lifted the remains on to his shoulders and we dashed down triumphant to get on some dry clothes.

The next scene lies in Neufchatel. The doctor had had the head mounted with a gold plate suitably inscribed. Naturally, he told the story everywhere.

Dr Guillarmod wanted to climb again in the Himalayas. He suggested Kangchenjunga, a giant like K2, upon whose slopes no one had yet dared to set foot. Crowley, of course, was enthusiastic; he wished to climb higher than any man had climbed before. Kangchenjunga would give him that chance; he would lead the party to the summit.

His insistence upon being the leader made Oscar Eckenstein decline to join the party. With Perdurabo in command, the risk was too great, he confessed to Kelly. Knowles, who was also invited, flatly rejected another climb with a man who had drawn a gun and threatened to shoot him at a height of 20,000 feet.

Crowley's doubts about Guillarmod's abilities as a mountaineer, carefully recorded in *The Confessions*, were conceived after the climb had taken place. Before setting off for the mountain, he was only afraid that he himself might fall, and he made this fanciful will.

In case of my death, George Cecil Jones will carry out these instructions:

Embalm the body.

Dress it in white Tau robe with Abra-Melin red and gold tunic and girdle, and the Crown and Wand. Also the big red sword.

Bury all magical jewels with me.

A pastos and vault to be prepared for coffin and tomb; in shape as taught, but without any figuring. Use white stone.

On the pastos write only Perdurabo.

Let the vault be bricked up and concealed utterly from human sight nor let any memorial of its place be kept. In the vault place vellum editions of all my works, hermetically sealed up.

The place shall be chosen by and known to George Cecil Jones alone. It shall be in ground consecrated by him.

Aleister Crowley

It was decided that Guillarmod should find at least two other mountaineers who would pay their share of the expenses of the expedition; and off he went with his haggis to Switzerland to look for them.

On 6 May, Crowley left Boleskine. He spent a week in Cairo, visited the Boulak Museum to see the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, and, doubtlessly, 'the infamous T— Club', or some other such club; then he took the boat to Bombay, where he arrived on 9

June. In Calcutta, the next stop on the journey, he called on Edward Thornton, who had accompanied him into the interior of Burma four years before; then he went north to Darjeeling and saw, forty miles ahead, the mountain he had decided to pit himself against.

Kangchenjunga is called the showpiece of the Himalayas, for it is not hidden, like Everest and K2, by satellite peaks, but can be seen by anyone on a clear day from the hill town of Darjeeling. It lies on the border between Sikkim and Nepal, fourteen miles from Tibet.

Guillarmod wired to say that he was bringing along Alexis Pache and Charles Reymond, both active officers of the Swiss Army and experienced Alpine climbers. And on 31 July the three Swiss mountaineers arrived in Darjeeling and shook hands with their leader.

A fifth man, who had never before put a foot on a mountain, had offered his services to Crowley and been accepted. This was Alcesti C. Rigo de Righi, the young Italian manager of the Drum Druid Hotel, where Crowley was staying. He could act as interpreter as he knew both Hindustani and Tibetan, and direct the provisioning of the expedition.

A contract was drawn up and signed by all five men. It contained the same sort of clauses as the contract used for the expedition to K2; but this time it was agreed that 'Aleister Crowley shall be sole and supreme judge of all matters respecting mountain craft, and the others will obey his instructions'.

Crowley was in a hurry to get started, but they had to wait till permission to enter Nepal was granted. So meanwhile he added finishing touches to his preparations, and wrote for the Allahabad *Pioneer Mail* two articles on the 1902 expedition to K2. The first article contained a quite unnecessary, and unjustified, abuse of Alpine guides; it says nothing about the guides, but a lot about Aleister Crowley.

I may observe that only the most expert men on the easiest mountains should deliberately handicap themselves by taking 'guides', those always incompetent and too often cowardly and drunken peasants whom, if they have learnt by rule of thumb the way up a few easy Swiss peaks, our Alpine quacks love to extol as the highest type of men.

L. Sullivan of Lucknow, taking Crowley seriously, sent the editor of the *Pioneer* this defence of Alpine guides.

... a particularly plucky, sober and intelligent set of men, and in the course of a considerable number of visits to Switzerland, I have never heard any climber of experience express similar views to those of your correspondent.

Crowley's second article included an attack on the Alpine Club 'that has crushed every spark of mountain ability from the youth of England'. The next issue of the paper contained this reply from an outraged reader who signed himself 'A'.

Sir, I note that 'Aleister Crowley', whoever he may be, has published in the *Pioneer* the second of his valuable contributions on the subject of the Kangchenjunga expedition. From the tone of it, I judge him to be a disappointed candidate for membership of the Alpine Club, to which I may add I have not the privilege of belonging. The sport of mountaineering will certainly suffer no loss if Kangchenjunga permanently effaces this polished individual . . .

On 8 August, they set off in the pouring rain with seven tons of food and luggage, two hundred and thirty porters, and three personal servants whom they had brought from Kashmir – the three Kashmiris who had accompanied the expedition to K2 – chief among whom was Salama, bearded, turbaned and, judging from his photograph, bow-legged.

Mount Everest has been calculated to be 29,002 feet high; K2 28,250 feet, and Kangchenjunga 28,150 feet, but there was still some argument about the exact height of these three giants of the Himalayas, the three highest mountains in the world. Colonel Sidney Burrard, who was Superintendent of the Trigonometrical Survey of India when Crowley was in Darjeeling, put Everest first, Kangchenjunga next with a height of 28,225 feet, and K2 fourteen feet lower. At this time, all three were unconquered: Everest was not climbed until 1953, when two members of a British party reached the summit, and Kangchenjunga until 1955 by another British party led by Charles Evans, now Sir Charles, President of the Alpine Club.

In 1899, Douglas Freshfield had explored Kangchenjunga and his companion, Vittoria Sella, had photographed it. And before them W. W. Graham had scrambled about in this part of the world and climbed Jubonu, 19,350 feet, a peak of the neighbouring Kabru range.

Kangchenjunga is a particularly dangerous mountain to climb.

Because of its relatively isolated position, it collects and hurls down to the glaciers below, huge avalanches of snow and ice, some of which are hundreds of feet thick. In the opinion of that distinguished English mountaineer, the late Frank Smythe, there is probably no mountain in the world which exposes the climber to greater danger.

Crowley led his men through leech-infested, rhododendron-covered valleys. He had been negotiating for months for permission to enter the state of Nepal. As they approached the border village of Kang La, word came that they would be allowed to proceed.

After a march lasting a fortnight, they found themselves, on 22 August, beside the south-west face of the mountain, the ascent of which proceeds along the Yalung Glacier. The assault on Kangchenjunga had begun.

Crowley was perfectly happy with this route as soon as he set eyes on it. 'I went up the glacier for reconnaissance,' he said. 'I wanted to establish the main camp as high up as possible.' He did suspect, though, that the glacier's stream might turn out to be unscalable. But all his doubts vanished as he climbed higher.

Already at a height of fourteen or fifteen thousand feet, less than fourteen days' march in the valley, I was in excellent physical condition. Not an ounce of my reserves of strength had been used up. A completely clear path led to the summit in front of me. The mountain was hardly five miles away, the weather was always improving and of the extreme temperatures, which had been so terrible on Chogo Ri, there was no trace. In short there was not a single dark speck on the horizon.

And later: 'The summit of Kangchenjunga was only two miles away, and I could see almost the whole of that questionable area which had been hidden from me during my reconnaissance [through a telescope] at Darjeeling. I climbed up a bit higher and the last doubt vanished.'

In the light of the opinions of later climbers, who saw more of the mountain than did Crowley and his party, this view is optimistic to the point of blindness. 'What appear to the naked eye as straggling thin white threads are terrific ice-armoured couloirs, down which crash stones, and ice avalanches from disintegrating cliffs of rock and ice,' wrote Frank Smythe, who was on Professor Dyhrenfurth's 1930 expedition which attacked the mountain from the north-west. 'A minute's examination was needed to assure us

that it was futile to seek a way from the Yalung Glacier', the route taken by Crowley.

Crowley forged ahead, leaving Guillarmod and Reymond to look after the greater part of the coolies, and Pache and de Righi in the rear. 'I had told them the best way across the glacier,' he said. 'Compared with Piccadilly it was a more or less complicated and difficult walk but surely less difficult than an average march on the Baltoro Glacier. The purpose of my going ahead was to make sure that Camp III should be as favourably situated as it looked at a distance. It was so.'

Of the 230 porters, 130 had been supplied by the Sikkim government; they carried their loads to a height exceeding that of Mont Blanc, then they refused to go any further. They feared the god of the Five Great Peaks, which is the literal meaning of the words Kang Chen Junga; they put down their loads and left in a body. Guillarmod was grateful that they had come so far, and he consoled himself with the thought that their departure meant a great saving of provisions. But when he considered the glacier, he was as pessimistic as Crowley was optimistic. 'The moraines mixed themselves up with the crevasses in a diabolical maze and one could no longer count the halts and the countermarches which were often useless.'

As the doctor climbed higher and saw, through the gaps in the fog and clouds, the obstacles that lay ahead, he lost hope completely of ever reaching the summit by the route that had been chosen. 'The western ridge of Kangchenjunga stood out against a cloudless sky of intense blue,' he wrote.

Precipices, swept incessantly by avalanches, left us no hope of the possibility of direct access by this ridge, which did not appear as disconcerting as the approaches to it. Not the least snowfield was approximately horizontal; there was no place, not even a square yard, to pitch the smallest of our tents. The rocks themselves, supposing that human forces still permitted us to perform acrobatic feats at such a height, nowhere offered any point of attack at all tempting.²

They had been only three days on the lower slopes of the mountain when hostility broke out between Crowley and Guillarmod. The Swiss doctor began by criticizing Crowley for failing to

mark his passage with little 'stone men', so that he had to assume the leadership of his own party; he said that he did not know where Crowley was or what he was doing. Furthermore, he was shocked by the brutal way in which Crowley treated the porters; in Guillarmod's view, this was the main cause of the breakdown of the climb.

Crowley, for his part, was furious with the doctor for making his own camps, instead of finding and settling down in the ones he had established. Like two builders on the Tower of Babel, they could no longer speak the same language.

On 25 August, after Crowley had pointed out to Guillarmod and Reymond the route to be followed, then gone ahead to find a suitable spot for their next camp, the doctor discovered to his stupefaction that the porters were without suitable shoes, and that most of them were still barefoot. He said that Crowley had assured him that they all had good shoes hidden in their baggage.

Although the climb had only just begun, Guillarmod plainly saw the uselessness of all their efforts and expense, and the failure of the expedition. He cursed Lord Boleskine on whose pleasant estate he had shot the rare haggis, and pronounced him a careless and unscrupulous individual – un individu négligent et sans conscience.

Reymond went in search of another route for the coolies, one which would avoid, if possible, the ice, but he soon returned to say that the glacier was their only way. He began to cut steps for the shoeless porters. Suddenly Crowley reappeared and lent a hand. He hacked out half a dozen steps but so badly that the doctor shuddered as he put his weight on them.

Resigned to failure, Guillarmod thought that all they could do now was to try to get as high as possible before the final impasse.

In continuous danger of being overwhelmed and crushed by avalanches – one writer has said that Kangchenjunga can brush off men as men brush off flies – they reached a little rocky ridge set at a very sharp angle, and there they pitched camp for the night.

In the most uncomfortable site, but also the most grandiose which it is possible to imagine (astride a thin ridge of snow which had to be cut away in order to pitch the tents and which might have slipped, with equal and terrible ease, either down one side or the other), we remained for two days, as much to rest ourselves as to wait for a convoy of provisions.¹

¹ Au Kangchinjunga. Voyage et explorations dans l'Himalaya du Sikhim et du Népal. Echo des Alpes, Nos. 8 et 9. 1914.

² Op. cit.

On 27 August, Crowley was awake at 3.00 am. By a stupendous effort, he got the men off by 6.00 am. 'The doctor strongly opposed me, urging that the men should be allowed to warm themselves thoroughly before starting.'

The next morning several porters deserted, and one of them 'lost his footing precisely at the spot where Crowley had cut the only steps in the whole ascent'. He slipped into the abyss.

On the 29th, Guillarmod, who had spent the previous day ill in bed, went down the mountain with a party to search for the body. They found it mutilated on a rocky spur 1,500 feet below. To the porters, the death of their comrade was not surprising; the god of the Five Great Peaks demanded sacrifices. They buried the body according to the rites of their religion.

Guillarmod continued to climb down the mountain until, two hours later, he fell into Camp III, where he found several porters suffering from mountain sickness and snow blindness. That afternoon de Righi came up from Camp II with more than fifty men.

Meanwhile Pache had joined Crowley at Camp V, but the porter who had been carrying Pache's bed, demoralised by the death of his comrade, and the thought of joining the Burra Sahib – the Great Lord, as Crowley was called – failed to arrive; he had dropped behind, deposited his load on the snow, and fled.

By now Crowley was in a bitter mood. He had fallen out with everyone. He could not understand what was wrong with Guillarmod, and de Righi was 'simply off his head'. He described the doctor's reactions to the loss of the porter thus: 'Next morning Guillarmod was well enough to curse. I couldn't imagine what it was that was torturing him and I can't imagine even now. The kindest explanation I can give for his conduct is that he was mentally unbalanced.'

As for the porters, they were demoralised by 'the excited, shrieking Reymond'. To revive their courage Crowley said he performed a little feat which he described in his novel, *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, written seventeen years later.

But the best of it was this: I was in command of a Himalayan expedition some years ago; and the coolies were afraid to traverse a snow slope which overhung a terrific cliff. I called on them to watch me, flung myself on the snow head first, swept down like a sack of oats, and sprang to my feet on the very

edge of the precipice. There was a great gasp of awed amazement while I walked up to the men.

In the evening of 31 August, a number of porters tumbled into Camp IV and complained to Guillarmod that Crowley had been beating them. They had had enough and were on their way home. They continued down to Camp III, where de Righi, who knew their language fluently, persuaded them not to abandon the expedition. He gave his word that he would not allow the Burra Sahib to beat them any more and that they were not obliged to spend a night in the same camp with him. Reluctantly, they took up their loads again.

Crowley admitted beating a porter, but only for his own good, and for the sake of the others. His party, which contained Pache and Reymond, had attained a height of 21,000 feet. Suddenly the men were startled by a small avalanche falling in their direction. One of the porters

completely lost his head and with the instinct that makes a drowning man lift his hands into the air, he began to do the one thing that might have killed him: he began to undo the rope. I ordered him to stop but he was completely hysterical, breaking into senseless screams. There was only one means of saving him from his suicidal act. I took aim and gave him one with the axe. That pulled him together immediately and prevented his panic being transferred to the other men.

They started back to Camp V, but Crowley had not re-established morale; for in the very next paragraph he says that they began to talk nonsense of the demon of Kangchenjunga 'and the tiny avalanche grew to the most fantastic dimensions. In the night a few crept away.'

The following morning de Righi joined Guillarmod at Camp IV; they soon ran into the porters who had slipped away in the night from the Great Lord who beat them.

At 10.00 am Guillarmod and de Righi set off for Camp V, determined to hold a durbar and depose Crowley from the leadership of the expedition. The camp was deserted when they arrived four hours later, but they could see Crowley in the distance.

Here is Crowley's description of the arrival of Guillarmod and de Righi.

Meanwhile I saw to my surprise that a large crowd of men had arrived at Camp V. When I came down I found that

Guillarmod's hysteria and de Righi's stupidity had caused a fine mess again. They had arrived in the camp with seventeen or twenty coolies, but without bringing any of the things we needed so much. Their conduct was quite inexplicable. The doctor appeared not to know what he was saying. His remarks spoke only of a confused irritation. He seemed incapable of answering any of my questions, or of explaining what had happened. His only idea was to hold a conference, and to have himself elected leader in my place. Such folly had not been thought of in our contract which, he seemed to think, was nothing more than a scrap of paper. When the others came an excited argument began. No one suggested I had behaved unfairly in any way. From the beginning to the end it was nothing more than the resentment of a foreigner at being led by an Englishman . . .

There was no arguing with Crowley and no shouting him down. Now there were two leaders of the expedition – Crowley, who was leading himself, and Guillarmod. The immediate problem was where should they sleep for the night, for there was no room for all of them at Camp V. Guillarmod and de Righi decided to return to Camp III, the main base. Pache also wanted to go down with them, because for the previous three nights, through the loss of his bed, he had been sleeping uncomfortably on the floor of the tent. At 5.00 pm on 1 September, they set off.

'We took him [Pache] then on our rope and also his servants, leaving Crowley at Camp V with Reymond,' said the doctor.

We were six on the rope, three Europeans with boots furnished with crampons, and three coolies of whom two were ill-shod and whom we took on the rope out of pity. The first steps went well enough. The coolies in the middle slipped sometimes, but the rope being always well stretched, one readily held them. A little later the track, which descended vertically, turned at a right angle, and became horizontal. De Righi and I passed easily, but the coolie who followed slipped and dragged the fourth man with him. Pache had not the strength to hold these two men on a slope so steep and he, in his turn, lost his footing, as did also the sixth man.

De Righi and I, firmly planted, thought we could hold these four men, the speed of whose fall rapidly increased. Immediately the cord became stretched, the snow slipped away quickly from under our feet, thus causing an avalanche which soon took on enormous proportions. The whole slope of the mountain

was soon swept clear, over more than fifty yards wide. Without support for my feet, despite my crampons, and suspended by my hands to my well-fixed ice-axe, I was just about to hold on to de Righi as he was carried away by the avalanche; but when the whirlwind of our comrades passed, rolling over one another, there were no possible means of resisting a similar shock. I was violently separated from my ice axe, and dragged away in my turn.

Guillarmod tried in vain to catch another ice-axe as he saw his comrades disappear beneath the avalanche. He struggled to keep himself above the snow, swimming for all he was worth. It was all over in five seconds. He was thrown into a crevasse, falling upon his kidneys. He was almost suffocated but the movement had stopped. For a while he lay prostrate; then, when he had regained sufficient breath, he struggled up, gasping. With the aid of the rope which was immediately attached to de Righi, who was stretched out on his back on a higher ledge of the crevasse, he managed to pull himself out.

The Italian had been knocked senseless. He was entangled in the rope and half buried under the snow. The doctor succeeded in reviving and freeing him, but where were the others? They pulled the rope in vain. It descended vertically into the crevasse to a depth of which they were ignorant. They began to dig but there was nothing to be found but the snow and the rope extending deeper still.

They shouted for help, their voices in the rarefied air carrying far. Reymond promptly appeared. With their ice-axes all three dug furiously for an hour but there was no coming to the end of the rope with the missing men attached to it. 'I had two toes frozen,' wrote Guillarmod, 'and my hands were without feeling. Our comrades were dead long since. All our efforts were useless. Nothing remained for us but the sad duty of going to look for their bodies with other implements than our ice-axes.'

Let us return to Crowley who, although not present at the accident, had a lot to say about it.

I warned the rebels that they would certainly meet their death if they tried to go down that night. It might be more or less suitable for coolies, but for *them*: I knew only too well how great was Guillarmod's skill in producing accidents out of the most unsuitable material.

They became all the more furious. By rights I should have

broken the doctor's legs with my axe. To my horror I saw that Pache wanted to go down with them. The rascal had not even had the decency to bring a sleeping bag with him. I implored him to wait until the morning. I told him that he could have all my sleeping gear, but nothing could prevail upon him. I described the position to him, but he could not believe that I was speaking the literal truth when I said that Guillarmod at his best period was a dangerous fool on mountains and had now developed into a dangerous madman.

My heart broke when I said good-bye to him, for I had taken a great liking to the man and my last words were: 'Don't go. I shall never see you again. In ten minutes you'll be dead.'

I'd made another mistake. He was still alive a quarter of an hour later.

Less than an hour later Reymond and I heard wild screams. No words could be distinguished but the voices were those of Guillarmod and de Righi. Reymond suggested going to their help at once, but it was now nearly dark and we had no one to send because de Righi had taken the men with him and there was no indication as to why they were screaming. They had screamed the whole day long. Reymond hadn't yet taken off his boots, and said he would go and see what was wrong and would call me if any help was needed. He went and neither returned nor called me. I went to sleep and rose next morning at dawn and went down to see.

And what did Crowley see? Not much, according to Guillarmod, who wrote: 'The following day one saw Crowley coming down from the upper camp without even knowing if our comrades would be found. He deserted the expedition in a cowardly manner and we heard no more of him until we arrived back at Darjeeling.'

They saw Crowley, but he did not see them. When, on the morning of 2 September, Crowley descended the deserted snow slopes of the great mountain, he suddenly heard voices. He approached Camp IV and called aloud, 'Who is there?'

There was no reply. The noises died away, but soon they began again. 'I could have sworn I heard voices,' said Crowley. 'Again I called and again dead silence fell. Almost I began to think myself the prey of an hallucination.'

Thus ended the first attempt to climb Kangchenjunga. The accident which killed Alexis Pache, the thirty-one year-old lieutenant

in the Swiss Cavalry, and three nameless coolies, was not Crowley's fault, but his reaction to it greatly increased his reputation of being different from other men. *The Alpine Journal*, which published in February 1906, a brief account of the climb, pointed out that Crowley had never had any connection with the Alpine Club. If it was Crowley's intention to make himself odious in the eyes of all mountaineers, he succeeded completely.

On his arrival at Darjeeling, he cabled an inaccurate account of the expedition and the accident which terminated it to the London *Daily Mail*, expressing his disgust of his crew, and the hope of 'success another year with a properly equipped and disciplined expedition'.

The only question which remains to be answered is why he did not go out to the accident.

Forty years after this tragic event, when Crowley was recording in a shaky hand on little rectangular pieces of paper the number of grains of heroin he was taking daily, he used this phrase to describe his despair: *Kangchenjunga phobia*. Only his fear of the great mountain could express the agony of his last years. When alone in that waste of snow and ice, he had heard voices – of the dead or of the demon of the Five Great Peaks. Dread had risen up in him and without thinking he fled.

9 THE WALK ACROSS CHINA

ON 6 September, Guillarmod, Reymond, and de Righi saluted their fallen friend and shed a tear before his tomb of boulders, surmounted by a rough-hewn cross. As they leisurely returned to civilisation, they visited Tibetan temples and gathered plants, beetles, and stones to take back with them to Switzerland for scientific study. And on their arrival at Darjeeling, they discovered to their rage that Crowley had published his version of the expedition in the Indian papers. Apparently the doctor had imagined that Crowley would wish to say as little as possible about the fate of the expedition. Instead he found himself arraigned in print for taking the five men on the rope, for cutting the rope to free himself, and for other infamies. And Crowley's comment on Pache's and the coolies' deaths left him flabbergasted.

'As it was, I could do nothing more than send out Reymond on the forlorn hope. Not that I was over anxious in the circumstances to render help. A mountain "accident" of the sort is one of the things for which I have no sympathy whatever.'

Crowley's fifth, and final, article in the *Pioneer* was in defence of himself.

But just a word of explanation by way of parenthesis as to why I did not go down at the time of the accident. I was in bed at the time of the first shout, making tea, after twelve hours without food in the snow; and it would have taken me ten minutes to dress. Reymond had his boots and patawe on, ready to start; I told him to call me if, when he found what was wrong, he needed any assistance. He did not call me. . . . Nobody who was not there can judge of the circumstances; and I was the only person who was there who knew one end of a mountain from the other. . . . The doctor is old enough to rescue himself and nobody would want to rescue de Righi . . .

The rest of this article was devoted to abuse of the service at de Righi's Drum Druid Hotel, where Crowley had returned and made himself comfortable.

From Crowley's account of this sordid tail-end of a mountaineering adventure, or Crowley's last villainy as Guillarmod called it, we learn that the doctor threatened to bring a charge of fraud against him, 'with a copy of *Snowdrops* which I shall deposit in a place where you would rather not see it, you scoundrel.... Your explanations stumble over four dead men.'

De Righi replied to Crowley in the next issue of the Pioneer:

To give you a final example of the individual we had to deal with, I will add a few extracts from letters written by him to the doctor long before the expedition started, these in face of my agreement with him and after paying him the equivalent of £100. As I could not afford the sum in cash I paid him Rs.350 in cash, and after much haggling he took from me a fine Tibetan banner, a large piece of carved lapis lazuli and a necklace of green jade as an equivalent for the rest. 'My dear J.G. - All goes well here and I hope to have with us the manager of this hotel, a young Italian who speaks Tibetan and is in the habit of doing business and travelling with the natives. . . . He will save us a lot of money as he knows the right price of everything which we need to buy here, and how to cut very low the natives' rate of pay. His name is Rigo de Righi. You must realize that he will be very useful to us, although he is not quite a "gentleman". He can get angry and uselessly complain. We must, then, I think, keep him at arm's length. But all will go well without doubt. After he has done his job, the removal of our heavy baggage to the main camp, we can, if he becomes difficult, send him back without ceremony, but I hope he will behave himself.'

This is the sort of man who was the leader of the 1905 Kangchenjunga Expedition. Need I say more why we decided to ask him to give up his position? I leave your readers to form their own opinion.

Not content with all the charges he brought against me during the expedition, he lays further charges because I upheld Nangar in his demand for two pieces per man commission as sardar, which was promised him by Mr Crowley before leaving, if he got the coolies to come for Rs.20 per month and himself came for Rs.30. He states that on everything that was bought on the road I peculated a commission, and that I was well known in Darjeeling for doing so. I told him that it was a lie and a liar who said so. To this he answered that an officer friend of his had told him this. I told him I could not believe an English officer could be capable of making such a charge, and

wish to hide his name. When I asked for the name of this officer, it was refused. This comes from what, I suppose, would be considered a 'gentleman' educated at Cambridge University. In his opinion I am not quite a gentleman; if so, and if gentlemen are of his stamp, I am glad I am not one.

Guillarmod decided that it would be too expensive and quite futile to prosecute Crowley for embezzling part of the funds of the expedition – most of the money had been supplied by the doctor – so Crowley continued to enjoy in peace the favours of a Nepalese girl who inspired him to write more poetry.

NEPALI LOVE-SONG

O kissable Tarshitering! The wild bird calls its mate – and I? Come to my tent this night of May, and cuddle close and crown me king!

Drink, drink our fill of love at last – a little while and we shall die,

O kissable Tarshitering!

Droop the long lashes; close the eyes with eyelids like a beetle's wing.

Light the slow smile, ephemeral as ever a painted butterfly, Certain to close into a kiss, certain to fasten on me and sting! Nay? Are you coy? Then I will catch your hips and hold you wild and shy

Until your very struggles set your velvet buttocks all a-swing, Until their music lulls you to unfathomable ecstasy,

O kissable Tarshitering!

Soon he wandered off alone to Calcutta, where he accepted the invitation of the Maharajah of Moharbhanj to a big-game hunt in Orissa.

Crowley had now reached his thirtieth birthday. The elation which he had felt earlier in the year had gone; he prophesied that he would never experience it again. The future, uncertain and forbidding, stretched out before him.

A letter he wrote at this time to Gerald Kelly reveals the turmoil of his mind.

After five years of folly and weakness, miscalled politeness, tact, discretion, care for the feeling of others, I am weary of it. I say today: to hell with Christianity, Rationalism, Buddhism, all the

lumber of the centuries. I bring you a positive and primaeval fact, Magic by name; and with this I will build me a new Heaven and a new Earth. I want none of your faint approval or faint dispraise; I want blasphemy, murder, rape, revolution, anything, bad or good, but strong.

In another mood, he explained that he wanted to achieve that detachment from the world and that exaltation of spirit known to mystics and the holy men of the East. 'I was absolutely convinced that it was of the utmost importance to give my life for the acquirement of Samadhi¹ which is the conscious intercourse with the Immanent Soul of the Universe.'

But in the meanwhile his capital, left him by his father, like Balzac's *peau de chagrin*, the magic shagreen skin, shrank alarmingly with the fulfilment of every wish.

Whither and wherefore? He did not know; he was not, anyhow, the kind of man to care. He was being driven on by his Holy Guardian Angel, whom he later identified with Aiwass. Any doubt that he may have had was cast away by the reassuring voice of Aiwass.

He returned to the study and practice of magic, followed the Enochian system devised by those two Elizabethan magicians, Dr John Dee and Sir Edward Kelley, as taught in the Golden Dawn. He ascended the Astral Plane to meet Elaine Simpson. They discussed the Great Work; it was nothing less than the creation of a new universe. A golden falcon was perched upon her shoulder. Crowley, with a start, recognized in its features one of the Secret Chiefs.

Strangely, except for those who are familiar with paradox, he began to express this pure and mystical feeling by writing another obscene book. He was explicit about the seemingly contradictory nature of his vision. Although of the highest and most ennobling kind, 'I felt a compulsion to express myself in a satirical (and as some might think) obscene form'.

The inspiration, this time, came from Sir Richard Burton, to whose memory at a later date, he dedicated the second volume of his autobiography. After translating *The Arabian Nights*, Burton turned into English a 15th-century work known to scholars and collectors of literary curiosa as *The Perfumed Garden* or *The Scented Garden for the Soul's Recreation* by Nafzâwi. Burton died before his translation, with its many learned notes, was given to

Persian mystical verse, Crowley's treatment of the subject is neither serious nor pious.

One night, Crowley left his hotel and went out into the streets of Calcutta seeking adventure. He made for a spot called Culinga Bazaar, which he described as a street of infamy.

It was a feast night, the Durga Puja of the Bengali and thousands of Hindus and Moslems of every caste and sect darted by, a bewildering series of flashes, red, blue, white, and brown. Leaving a minor main street with its torment of damned souls (thus he imagined the Indian crowd), he found himself in a thronged way that seemed to lead in the direction he wanted to go.

He was now in a labyrinth of tiny streets, arched, curved, tunnelled, and exceedingly narrow, so that he felt - the simile is his - like an inhabitant of flat-land lost on the thumb-print of a murderer.

Suddenly he had the eerie, disturbing feeling that he was being followed. Passing through an archway, he came in pitch darkness into the narrowest possible passage; there was just room for two men to walk abreast.

Glancing back, he saw six faint, white flashes, the robes of men marching in Indian file. He was wearing a dark suit and pressed himself against the wall, hoping that he would be passed unnoticed.

As the third man went by the file swiftly bent in two. In an instant he was seized and his arms pinned to his sides. Rough hands began to search his pockets.

He saw the pallid gleam of a knife, a cry rose in his throat and his fingers contracted upon the trigger of a .38 Webley which he was holding in his pocket.

There was a click, the hammer had fallen but only upon an empty chamber. While still able to move his right forefinger, he tried again.

There was a terrific report and the white blouses fell away from him like a screen toppling over. Soon the street began to surge with people hunting 'with cries of hatred' for the gunman.

Escape seemed cut off; there was only one thing left for Crowley to do - to make himself invisible. Accordingly, with a silent prayer to the great god Harpocrates, Perdurabo the Adept mysteriously vanished.

Is the story true or had Crowley only imagined it? Well, someone shot two Indians that night in the streets of Calcutta.

his publisher, and the manuscript fell into the hands of his wife, who lacked his interests and openness of mind. She was horrified as she read the work. Suddenly - her story runs thus - her dead husband appeared to her in a vision, and he begged her, in an-

guish, to destroy the manuscript completely.

Like Burton, Crowley had picked up a good deal of information on Eastern sexual practices, and with the help of a munshi, who for a short time was teaching him Persian, he began to compose ghazals, a form of Persian verse, purporting to be translations from that language - with Persian words and phrases spangling the text to make the forgery more convincing. He planted his imaginary poet, Abdullah al Haji, into the 17th century and gave him the same place of origin as that of the celebrated Hafiz. The collection of forty-two poems was entitled The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz ('translated from a rare Indian MS by the late Major Lutiy and Another'). Major Lutiy was an imaginary Anglo-Indian who had found, translated, and annotated the manuscript. As he was killed in the South African war before he had finished the job, an unnamed 'editor' completed it with the help of 'a Christian clergyman who discusses the matter of the poem from the peculiar point of view of high Anglicanism'. This is, of course, Crowley's irony, for the poems themselves, the introduction and the many footnotes, largely plagiarised from Burton, are scandalously lewd.

Crowley, in his characteristically schizoid way, took a pious view of this pornographic tour de force when he came to discuss it in the third part of his autobiography.

The book itself is a complete treatise on Mysticism, expressed in the symbolism prescribed by Persian piety. It describes the relations of God and man, explains how the latter falls from his essential innocence by allowing himself to be deceived by the illusions of matter. His religion ceases to be real and becomes formal; he falls into sin and suffers the penalty thereof. God prepared the pathway of regeneration and brings him through shame and sorrow to repentance, thus preparing the mystical union which restores man to his original privileges, free will, immortality, the perception of truth, and so on.

Although homosexual themes are not incompatible with Persian mysticism (the poetry of the famous Hafiz is not free from these sentiments), and they are, in fact, part of the convention of The Calcutta Standard carried half a column about it in the middle of the front page.

ALLEGED ASSAULT ON A EUROPEAN. Two men shot. A somewhat sensational event is under police investigation in connection with what is alleged to have been a forcible attempt made by some half-dozen badmashes to rob a European who defeated their purpose by shooting two of them . . .

Making himself visible again, Crowley drove immediately to see his friend Thornton, who told him to go to bed and see a lawyer in the morning.

The lawyer advised him to read *Uncle Remus* and to study especially the character of Brer Rabbit who 'lay low and sed nuthin'.

That afternoon Rose and Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith arrived in Calcutta. Perdurabo greeted her on the quayside with these words, 'Welcome, beloved, to India's sunny shores. You're just in time to see me hanged.'

The next day the papers bore an announcement from the Commissioner of Police, offering 100 rupees reward for information leading to the arrest of the European.

He asked Rose where she would prefer to go, Persia or China.

In an out-of-the-way corner of the earth, amid a landscape bizarre and wild, wandered Brother Perdurabo. He was somewhere between Tengyueh and Talifu, in the province of Yunnan. He had entered China from Burma, after having gone by steamer up the Irrawaddy to Bhamo. With him were his wife and child (borne along in a chair by porters), Salama, the Kashmiri who had accompanied him both to K2 and Kangchenjunga, and an Indian nurse who, at some stage of the journey, fell out with Crowley, left the party, and got back home as best she could. They camped in the open and in a leisurely fashion, made for Talifu.

'I found myself in the middle of China¹ with a wife and child,' wrote Crowley. 'I was no longer influenced by love for them, no longer interested in protecting them as I had been.' He was lost amid his conversations with the mighty men of antiquity, guardians of the esoteric tradition. One by one they passed before his impassioned gaze; Pythagoras, Plotinus, Avicenna, Paracelsus, Fludd, William Blake. . . . He heard them all. Every event in his

1 In the middle of somewhere but not China, for Yunnan is on the periphery of that vast country.

life had been prearranged by them to help him accomplish the Great Work. From these trances he sank back to earth in a cradle of flame.

Part of Crowley's 'Walk Across China' was undertaken on the back of a Burmese pony. He admitted that for a time he was not in his right mind. Whether this was due to the practice of a form of magical invocation which he called *Augoeides*¹ – shouted out amid the deserts and hills of this part of Western China – or to a fall of forty feet over a cliff, when his pony backed and threw him, is not clear.

He was tormented with doubt about the meaning of his existence, doubt which he would in the end dispel with thoughts of his Holy Guardian Angel.

'I am indeed sent to do something. For whom? For the Universe? . . . What shall I teach men? And like lightning from heaven fell upon me these words: "The Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel".'

He was so far away from himself that he became some other, and strange, figure, to whom he referred in the third person. 'He had come to the point of conquering his mind. That mind had broken up... passing from this, he came as a little child, and on reaching the Unity behind the mind, found the purpose of his life formulated in these words, "The Obtaining of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel".'

Aiwass was the only thing that mattered. He must leave everything and everyone and follow his daemon.

He shaved his head as a token of surrender to his Angel, and purchased an opium pipe. In five hours he smoked twenty-five pipes, but with no result whatsoever; then he discovered that this was because he had not been inhaling.

In Kandy with Alan Bennett, he had tried laudanum and when on his first visit to Burma he had eaten powdered opium. Now for the first time he discovered the pleasures of smoking opium.

From Talifu, they went along the road to the town of Yunnan, a distance of about 200 miles, and at some spot on this journey he received this communication from the Secret Chiefs:

One morning I had sat down to rest and smoke a pipe on the top of a little pass in warm and misty weather. Salama came and

1 Augoeides, αὐγοειδής, from αὖγος, the morning light, the dawn. Crowley borrowed this word from Π ερὶ Μυστηρίων, De Mysteriis, of Iamblichus, who was the greatest of the anti-Christian philosophers.

sat down by my side. I looked at him in amazement. It was an astounding breach of etiquette. I have often wondered if he did it deliberately, as if to say, 'I am not your headman: I am a messenger of the Gods.' He began, however, in a very shamefaced, sheepish way, obviously embarrassed. 'Sahib,' he said, 'last night I had a tamasha.' I reproached him laughingly, Tamasha means an entertainment of any kind, and, in the East, frequently implies a certain amount of liveliness, possibly an indulgence in forbidden liquor and flirtation; but he merely meant a dream. 'I was on the shore of a small lake,' he proceeded. 'It was a wild country and the lake was surrounded by tall reeds, some of them growing in the water. The full moon was high in the sky, but there were clouds and mist. You were standing in front of me, Sahib; quite motionless, lost in thought, as you always are, but you seemed to be waiting for someone. Now there was a rustling in the reeds, and out of them came a boat rowed by two beautiful women with long fair hair, and in the front of the boat stood another woman, taller and fairer even than her sisters. The boat came slowly across to you; and then I saw that the woman held in her hands a great sword, long and straight, with a straight cross-hilt which was heavy with rubies, emeralds and sapphires. She put this sword into your hands and you took it, but nothing was said. They went away as they had come, into the fringe of the reeds across the lake. And that was all I saw '

I remained unable to reply. At this time I was the last man in the world to take anything of the sort seriously. What struck me dumb was hearing an old Shikari tell the story of *Excalibur* in language so near to that of Malory as to make no odds. Could one of his Sahibs have told him the tale long ago, so that it popped up again in this strange fashion? I had no doubt whatever of the man's sincerity and truthfulness, and he had no motive for inventing anything of the sort.

I cannot believe it a coincidence; I really wondered whether the most reasonable hypothesis is not that Aiwass, wanting to remind me that I was chosen to do the Great Work, picked out, on the one hand, Salama as the most unlikely prophet imaginable; on the other, the tale was one which I could not possibly dismiss as trivial.

Crowley changed his mind about sailing down the Yang-tse. Kangchenjunga was still on his mind; he wanted to go back to

Europe and raise another expedition to its slopes. 'I had the mountain, so to speak, in my pocket,' he said. 'A party of average strength could make as certain of strolling to the top as if it were the Strand.' So he sailed instead down the Red River to Tong-king in French Indo-China, experiencing on the way what he called 'an unpleasant incident.'

He had fallen out with the porters who had carried him and Rose about the valleys and hills of Yunnan (as he had fallen out with the porters on Kangchenjunga) and he took his revenge on them accordingly.

It was not until we had left Manhao that I saw my chance of getting even with the coolies. I had hired a dug-out to take us down the rapids of Ho-K'ou, and having got everything on board, I proceeded to pay the head man the exact sum due to him – less certain fines. Then the band played. They started to threaten the crew, and prevented them from throwing off the ropes. They incited the bystanders to take their part; and presently we had thirty or forty yelling maniacs preparing to stone us. I got out my .400 Cordite Express and told Salama to wade ashore and untie the ropes. But like all Kashmiris, thoughtlessly brave in the face of elemental dangers, he was an absolute coward when opposed to men.

I told him that unless he obeyed at once, I would begin by shooting him. He saw that I meant it, and did his duty while I covered the crowd with my rifle. Not a stone was thrown; three minutes later the fierce current had swept us away from the rioters.

On 22 March 1906, they arrived at the seaport of Hai Phong. The 'Walk Across China', which had taken four months, was over.

10 THE STAR IN THE WEST

CROWLEY had been in regular astral communication with Elaine Simpson since he had last seen her in the flesh in Hong Kong. They summoned each other by an astral bell. (The sound of an 'astral bell' announced to Madame Blavatsky that her Master was present.) He described Elaine's astral body as slightly larger than her physical body – his own astral too – self-luminous, homogeneous and partly transparent, so that he could see the background through her. In the astral she was over six feet tall, in reality five feet seven inches.

Somewhere in Tong-king in Indo-China (today better known as North Vietnam), probably at the port of Hai Phong, he said good-bye to Rose and the baby and rushed off to meet Elaine in

Shanghai whither she had since moved.

He spent twelve days with her, performing various invocations. Elaine acted as his seeress or medium. For the first time he told her of *The Book of the Law*. He was still in his Buddhist phase; he had experienced in 1906 one of the higher Buddhist trances (Neroda-Sammapatti). Existence was Sorrow to him, not joy as taught by Aiwass. Hence his revulsion against *The Book of the Law* and the new teaching.

Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.

Instead of confirming him in his revolt against the Secret Chiefs (of whom Aiwass was the most important), Elaine emphatically told him that she believed in the genuineness of Aiwass's communication; he said he was infuriated to hear it.

Aiwass, when successfully invoked, spoke his mind about

Elaine, Sister Fidelis, and told Crowley what to do:

'Go at once to Egypt; money troubles will be settled more easily than you think now. . . . Do not take Fidelis. I do not like the relations between you; break them off! If not, you must follow other gods. Yet I would wish you to love physically, to make perfect the circle of your union. Fidelis will not do so, therefore she is useless.'

1 The Book of the Law.

And she would not do so because she was married to Mr Witkoswki and wanted, presumably, to remain faithful to him.

He said good-bye to Sister Fidelis and set off across the Pacific in the *Empress of India*. From Vancouver he took the train to New York, where he was photographed with a half-serious, half-non-chalant expression, an eye-glass dangling outside his jacket, a yellow bow-tie and his hair beginning to recede from his forehead. And somewhere between Shanghai and New York, he wrote *Rosa Coeli*, Rose of Heaven, one of the titles of the Virgin Mary.

Rose of the World! Your mystic petals spread Like wings over my head. The tide of burning blood upon my face Drowns all the floating images That danced their spectre saraband In Bacchic race, phantastical embrace, Upon the sepulchres, the dizzy seas Of this my mind, Sabbatic route that spanned These straits my soul! Ay, they are dead and drowned (And damned, I doubt!) Ah God! I am exhaust In the red moon's holocaust God! God! The chasms secret and profound Suck down the porphyry flood Of your maniacal, ensorcelled blood That maddens and bewitches My life is suffocated - now I swoon -I die! I am in hell, red hell, red hell, And all the immortal in me itches To grip the immortal . . .

When he arrived at Liverpool on 2 June 1906, he was sent reeling at the news that his little girl had died in Rangoon. He experienced no remorse at having left them in Tong-king while he ran off to see Sister Fidelis; he merely blamed Rose. 'She had neglected to cleanse the nipple of the feeding bottle, and thereby exposed the child to the germs of typhoid.' Duncombe-Jewell, his former factotum, was not surprised when he heard the news – he took a poor view of Crowley as a father – and he remarked that Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith had died of Acute Nomenclature.

To stimulate the sale of his *Collected Works* (the third volume of which was not published till 1907), Crowley had offered at the time the first volume was due to appear, a prize of £100 for the

121

best critical essay on his writings. He had announced the competition thus:

The Chance of the Year!
The Chance of the Century!!
The Chance of the Geologic Period!!!

For two years, no one seized this chance of the Geologic Period: then Crowley received, while he was in Darjeeling, a letter from a young Regular Army officer who was stationed at Lucknow to say that he would like to enter for the prize. He asked Crowley how he could obtain those works of his which he did not already possess. It seemed to Captain John Frederick Charles Fuller of the First Oxfordshire Light Infantry, that the mantle of Tennyson had fallen squarely upon the shoulders of Aleister Crowley; it also seemed to him that Crowley's creed, which he called Crowleyanity, was no less than what Crowley himself claimed for it - the new religion for mankind. In the spring of 1906, Fuller, who had served in the South African War, 1899-1902, was invalided home with enteric fever; in the summer of that year, he met Crowley and Rose in the old Hotel Cecil in the Strand; in October his prize essay on Crowley and his genius, The Star in the West, which he had begun to write at Lucknow, was finished and posted to Crowley at Boleskine.

Crowley is more than a new-born Dionysus, he is more than a Blake, a Rabelais or a Heine; for he stands before us as some priest of Apollo, hovering 'twixt the misty blue of the heavens, and the more serious purple of the vast waters of the deep.

It has taken 100,000,000 years to produce Aleister Crowley. The world has indeed laboured, and has at last brought forth a man.

The Star in the West – Crowley was that Star – won the competition. It was the only entry, and the work was immediately published.

Crowley, of course, had not been serious about giving away a hundred pounds. He boasted that he had been left a fortune, the size of which he grossly exaggerated – sometimes it was £100,000, sometimes merely £60,000 – but it was (according to Fuller) no more than a third share of £50,000; and by the time Fuller held out his hand for the prize of £100, there was not much of it left. As an undergraduate, Crowley confessed to Kelly, who had ob-

served that he fumbled while he, Kelly, paid the cabman, that he had not much money, nor nearly as much as people supposed.

Fuller's admiration for Crowley was such that it enabled the relationship to survive.

There is no mention of *Liber Legis* (the manuscript of which Crowley had mislaid) in *The Star in the West*. How, then, was it possible for Fuller to announce Crowleyanity? But even without *The Book of the Law*, Crowley was proclaiming a New Order for mankind, and to this, Fuller had succumbed.

'Crowleyanity has led us through more marvels than Dante ever hore witness to ...'

Three years later, Fuller quarrelled with Crowley, and Crowley lampooned him in *The Winged Beetle*, 1910, and at the same time cut off the branch that he himself was sitting on.

THE CONVERT

(A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE)

There met one eve in a sylvan glade A horrible Man and a beautiful maid. 'Where are you going, so meek and holy?' 'I'm going to temple to worship Crowley.' 'Crowley is God, then? How did you know?' 'Why, it's Captain Fuller that told us so.' 'And how do you know that Fuller was right?' 'I'm afraid you're a wicked man: Good night.'

While this short of thing is styled success I shall not count failure bitterness.

Fuller achieved the rank of Major-General, wrote better books on military history than *The Star in the West* and redirected his admiration towards another genius who was also fulfilling a New Order – Adolf Hitler. Fuller was one of two Englishmen who were invited by Hitler to his fiftieth birthday party celebrations.

Crowley continued to practise magic, to pour out poetry, and to swear solemn oaths to dedicate himself to a pure and selfless life.

Frater Perdurabo was crucified by Frater DDS,¹ and on that cross made to repeat this oath: 'I, Perdurabo, a member of the Body of Christ, do hereby solemnly obligate myself to lead a pure and unselfish life, and will entirely devote myself so to

1 George Cecil Jones.

raise myself to the Knowledge of my higher and Divine Genius that I shall be He.¹

He described 1907 and 1908 as years of fulfilment. In 1907, while recuperating from an illness, the nature of which he does not mention, he compiled his Cabbalistic dictionary, entitled 777. This book had been started by Mathers in collaboration with Allan Bennett, but it was left to Crowley to complete it – he had their notes – and publish it.²

But 1907, on the other hand, was the year that he 'went wrong' – or so he said during the 1920s in an anxious and melancholy period of his life. I think he meant that in 1907 there was still time for him to turn back. Rose had given birth to another daughter, Lola Zaza. He was thirty-two years of age. His roving, boisterous past could be set aside as the *Sturm und Drang* period of his life. He had still a chance of settling down and getting on with the business of ordinary living; but he kicked his mother-in-law downstairs instead – she had come to visit Rose and the three-weeks-old Lola Zaza who was ill with bronchitis – and strode on, into the Waste Land, praising the immortal gods.

One day during the summer of 1909, while he was stumbling about in the loft of Boleskine, looking for a pair of skis, his glance fell upon a flat brown paper parcel. Lo and behold, the missing manuscript of *The Book of the Law*! It was an event which marked the reappearance of Aiwass in his life; from then onwards, he listened only to the voice of his daemon.

His favourite rendezvous was a little chemist's shop in Stafford Street in the West End of London, managed by a man called E. P. Whineray. 'He supplied me with ingredients for some of my magical preparations, such as kyfi, the mysterious incense of the

1 From the Magical Record of Perdurabo.

ancient Egyptians; the perfume and oil of Abra-Melin, the *unguentum Sabbati*, and the like. In particular, he was at one time able to supply onycha.'

One evening in this Stafford Street chemist shop, Whineray told him that a certain English lord whom he, Whineray, knew, wished to meet him. This was George Montagu, the seventh Earl of Tankerville.

At that moment the man himself walked in. He took me round to his rooms; and, to my stupefaction, blurted out the most extraordinary story. I could hardly believe my ears. He told me his inmost family secrets, and those of the most atrocious kind, as if I had known him twenty years. He said that he was bewitched by his mother and a woman friend. On the surface these people were pious Evangelicals. The idea that they were trying to murder him by witchcraft was a little startling, no less so the alleged motive. Lord Tankerville had been the second son. He claimed that his elder brother had really been the son of some baronet or other; that his mother hated her husband, and had become desperate when the heir-apparent had been killed in battle. His mother had determined to kill her remaining son.

He saw witchcraft in every trifle. When the Countess happened to sneeze he would deduce that his mother was on the job. He had told his troubles to many people, and trusted them at first quite blindly and then without a word of warning would conclude from some harmless word or act that they had joined the conspiracy against him.

Of course, it was a perfectly plain case of persecution mania, accentuated by his old habit of brandy tippling and his newly acquired one of sniffing a solution of cocaine. Apart from his obsession there was nothing wrong with the man. He enjoyed magnificent health; he was one of the best preserved men of fifty to fifty-five that I have ever seen. He was deeply religious, with more than a touch of mysticism and a really deep insight into the Cabbala, which he understood although he knew little or nothing about it. I thought I could cure him, and undertook the task.

My plan in such cases is not to undeceive the patient. I proposed to treat his story as literally true in every way, to fight fire with fire. I said to him: 'What you must do is to develop your own magical powers so as to beat your mother at her own game.'

^{2 777} consists of the correspondences, or similarities, between the symbols in all the major magical and mystical systems; and it provides the occultist with a ready means of reference, so that he knows at a glance what is required for this or that working. For example, if he wants to invoke a mercurial spirit, such as Taphtathareth (in the Hebrew system), he sets up his circle and gathers his magical equipment according to the information given against the number 8 (which is Mercury's number) in the numerous columns of correspondences. Although 777 is a slim volume, it is the most comprehensive work of its kind. Later, at Cefalu, Crowley extended it and added an elaborate commentary.

He had considerable capacity for magick, and understood the object of the measures which I proposed. We began by chartering a yacht...

It was while he was ridding the Earl of Tankerville of his paranoid dementia in Morocco that Crowley, out on one of his lonely walks, ran into the Sidi Aissawa – eaters of scorpions – who were performing their secret, sacred dances.

I came upon a crowd of about two hundred people in a secluded spot. They were protected from intrusion by unofficial sentinels, strolling (apparently without aim) among the trees in a circle of a couple of hundred yards in diameter. I knew more or less what to expect, and before being observed, looked myself over to see that every article of my costume was correct. I then began to recite what I had learnt from my Sheikh in Egypt – 'the Great Word to become mad and go about naked'.

'Subhana Allahu Walhamdu lilahi walailaha illa allahu . . .'

I passed the sentinels and mingled with the crowd. The women were present, though they took no active part, and merely helped to keep the ring. The circle was some thirty feet across. Squatting on its edge were the usual musicians, playing for dear life, while a number of men, armed with very small light axes of peculiar workmanship, were dancing and yelling. These axes were evidently not the ordinary tools used in daily life, but manufactured for the purpose of the ceremony. With these weapons the men cut themselves on the head (very rarely elsewhere) until the blood was streaming from their scalps on every side. They were, of course, quite unconscious of any pain, and those of them who were actually blinded by the blood were yet able to see.

The excitement of the crowd was as great as that of the celebrants themselves, but it was rigorously suppressed. I cannot say that the ring kept absolute silence; I doubt whether I was sufficiently cool to make any reliable observations, and I certainly was beyond the stage of intellectual curiosity. But the impression was that the onlookers were deliberately abstaining from either speech or gesture. I governed myself accordingly. But it was hard for me to refrain from dashing down my turban, leaping into the ring with a howl of 'Allahu akbar!' getting hold of an axe, and joining in the general festivity.

It literally took away one's breath. It seemed that I was breathing with my heart instead of with my lungs. I felt myself

vibrating with the energy of the universe. It was as if I had become conscious of atomic energy or of the force of gravitation. I do not know how long I stood there holding myself in, but it must have been over an hour. Suddenly I became aware of a terrific reaction; I felt that I had missed my chance by not letting myself go, and perhaps be killed for my pains. At the same time I was seized with a sudden sense of alarm. I felt myself to be outside the spiritual circle. I was sure that someone would discover me, and a swift shudder passed through me as I apprehended my danger. Fortunately, I had sufficient presence of mind to resume my mantra, and melt away from the multitude as silently as I had descended upon it.

To let himself go, to hurl himself over the brink of consciousness, was Crowley's constant urge. As he said, it was a great strain to hold himself back from these dancing dervishes; he could, and should, have led them.

Crowley and Tankerville returned to England through Spain, saw a number of wonders on the way, and parted the worst of enemies. Tankerville was, it seems, uncured, 'He classed me as having joined the conspiracy against him of black magicians,' said Crowley. In this matter it is only Crowley's voice that can be heard, but from one utterance of Tankerville's, recorded in *The World's Tragedy*, written in 1908, it seems that the noble lord could, when the occasion demanded it, speak his mind.

"... as Lord Tankerville said to me at eleven am on the 7th of July, 1907, "I'm sick of your teaching – teaching – teaching – as if you were God Almighty and I were a poor bloody shit in the street."

11 THE VISION AND THE VOICE

It is the year 1909. Two men, one tall and heavily built, the other small and round-shouldered, tramp about the fringe of the desert under the North African sun. They are Europeans, Englishmen – English, anyhow, is the language they speak. They have come from Algiers, through Aumale, Sidi Aissa, Ain el Hajel, walking all the way. They have slept under the stars, encased in their sleeping bags, trusting to their Guardian Angels to preserve them from harm.

The African heaven has amazed and thrilled the little man, who is something of a poet, but not his companion, who has been beneath this sky before, and beneath the distant skies of India, China and Mexico.

Now the beautiful village of Bou Saada is behind them. There is no longer any road; the link with civilisation is broken.

The appearance of the two men is arresting. The taller – he is obviously the leader – is thirty-four years of age, rather stout, but with the frame of an athlete. His head is completely shaved, so that the hypnotic effect of his dark, staring eyes is enhanced – eyes that are at once cold and burning with some unearthly passion. On one of the fingers of his left hand he wears a star sapphire ring, set in a gold band of two entwined serpents; in his right hand he carries a wooden Calvary Cross of six squares, painted vermilion, in the middle of which is set a great golden topaz. He intones in Arabic a verse from the Koran.

The other man is also strange. The one arouses awe, even fear when he turns his transfixing eye upon you; the other laughter. He is eight years younger than his companion; his lips are large, his shoulders aslant because of a curvature of the spine. His head, too, is shaved, except for two tufts on the temples which have been twisted up and dyed red to look like horns. He follows behind the man with the Calvary Cross, almost fainting from fatigue and heat.

'Frater Perdurabo! Stop a minute, blast you!'

But in vain. If Brother Perdurabo heard him he does not show any sign of it. Besides, he looks on Frater Omnia Vincam ('I shall conquer all') only as a demon whom he has tamed and trained to serve him as his familiar spirit; and a demon, even a tame one, does not lack the energy to sprint a few yards.

Brother Perdurabo had no particular object in mind when he left Algiers, beyond filling his lungs and finding, perhaps, some new adventure. But at Aumale, in a hovel which was called a hotel, 'a hand suddenly smote its lightning into my heart' – as he picturesquely phrased it. A voice had spoken to him, enjoining him to go into the desert 'and call Me'.

A sweat had broken out over Perdurabo's body, and for a moment he had lost consciousness of where he was and his feet no longer seemed to touch the ground. It was not the first time he had heard this voice. It had spoken to him in Cairo in the spring of 1904, and had commanded him to write down a long mysterious message for bewildered mankind.

The two tufts of hair bob up and down like a young goat's horns as Brother Omnia Vincam breaks into a run. In the desert a man's life may depend upon his seeing a shadow flit across some far-off slope of a sand dune, the sign of an Arab ambush. Without the use of Perdurabo's finer eye and the revolver he has concealed in the sash round his waist and – much more than these – the protection of his magical power, what would his life be worth out here in the stony silence? But Brother Omnia Vincam has really nothing to fear; Perdurabo will not abandon him; for what would Perdurabo do without his *chela*, his amanuensis, his – the younger man hardly dares to use such a warm, informal word – his friend?

Oh, why had they left Bou Saada? And Omnia Vincam began to long for the coolness of the river that runs below it, at the bottom of the ravine; the palm trees and gardens of flower and fruit; the cactus hedges, and the comfort of white-walled houses. That was paradise enough. What had driven Perdurabo out into the wilderness again, and where was he taking him?

The stars seem so low to Brother Omnia Vincam, a graduate of Cambridge called Victor Benjamin Neuburg, that he thinks he can touch them from where he is lying. Or if not from there, then standing up; and if not standing up, then definitely from the shoulders of his comrade Perdurabo. Ah, if he stood on the shoulders of his great and terrible friend, he could certainly touch the stars and drag them down to earth for the sons of men.

The physical effort of marching hour after hour in the blazing sun, across the stony, glaring stretches of dusty solitude, has exhausted them both. Perdurabo is squatting on the ground, his head between his knees. His tame demon closes his eyes and falls asleep, thinking of Bou Saada.

'We merely wanted to rough it a bit in a new and interesting corner of the planet of which we are parasites,' said Crowley. He had accepted Neuburg as his *chela*, or pupil, in spite of his compulsive, cackling laugh and his shambling gait, because Omnia Vincam was a devotee of magic.

We hastily bought a few provisions, took the tram to Arba, and after lunch started south . . . I cannot imagine why or how the idea came to me. Perhaps I happened to have in my rucksack one of my earliest magical note-books, where I had copied with infinite patience the Nineteen Calls or Keys obtained by Sir Edward Kelley from certain angels and written from his dictation by Queen Elizabeth's astrologer with whom he was working.

Crowley's writings fall into three classes. First of all there is the writing which, he says, he did not himself write (although it is in his unmistakable style) but took down at another's dictation. *The Book of the Law* and twelve other short works, all of them forming 'The Holy Books of Thelema' are in this class. Then there are those works which, although written by him, are entirely or partly inspired, such as his poetry. Lastly, there are his works on magic, works of obscenity, novels, plays, his *Autohagiography* – the bulk of his works in fact – which were written by him alone, without assistance from Aiwass or anyone else.

Of works in the second class, *The Vision and the Voice* is the longest and, among his followers, the most highly appreciated. It was originally published in *The Equinox* in 1911, and as a separate work after Crowley's death by his American followers.²

The Vision and the Voice is not a work of imagination but the record of a magical operation, the Enochian 'Calls' or 'Keys' or incantations of John Dee and Edward Kelley which Crowley had studied in the Golden Dawn and later in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum and at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Dee was a mathematician, alchemist, and court astrologer. It

was he who selected 14 January 1559 as an auspicious day for Elizabeth's coronation. Kelley was a medium with the gift of prophecy; he had foretold, four years before the events happened, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and the coming of the Armada, He could also see spirits. Because of this faculty, Dee employed him as his scryer at a salary of £50 a year – not an insignificant sum at a time when artificers' wages were calculated in pence per day.

Kelley was twenty-eight years younger than his master. He wore a black skull-cap which also covered the back of his head to conceal, it was said, the loss of his ears after a conviction for forgery. (He had also been stood in the pillory.) He was the kind of person of whom nasty things were said; it was rumoured, for example, that he had dug up a body for the purpose of questioning the dead.

At Dr Dee's house at Mortlake in Surrey, Kelley would gaze into the doctor's 'shew-stone' or crystal – also called the holy stone, for an angel brought it to Dee through the window – and would describe what the spirits therein were doing. Sometimes the spirit would step out of the stone and Kelley would follow its progress about the room.

Meric Casaubon's large tome on Dee, entitled A True & faithful RELATION of what passed for many Yeers Between Dr JOHN DEE (A Mathematician of Great Fame in Q. Eliz. and King James their Reignes) and SOME SPIRITS, 1659, begins with this sitting (E. K. stands for Edward Kelley and the Greek Δ for Dee.):

Suddenly, there seemed to come out of my Oratory a *Spirituall* creature, like a pretty girle of 7 or 9 yeares of age, attired on her head with her hair rowled up before, and hanging down very long behind, with a gown of Sey . . . and seemed to go in and out behind my books . . . and as she should ever go between them, the books seemed to give place sufficiently. . . .

Δ. I said . . . Whose maiden are you?

SHE... Whose man are you?

Δ. I am the servant of God both by my bound duty, and also (I hope) by his Adoption.

A VOYCE... You shall be beaten if you tell.

SHE ... Am not I a fine Maiden? Give me leave to play in your house, my Mother told me she would come and dwell here.

 Δ . She went up and down with most lively gestures of a

¹ Communicated to Crowley by his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, between the years 1904 and 1911.

² Thelema Publishing Company, Barstow, California. N.D.

young girle, playing by her selfe, and diverse times another spake to her from the corner of my study by a great Perspective-glasse, but none was seen beside her self.

... Shall I? I will. (Now she seemed to answer one in the foresaid *Corner* of the Study.)

... I pray you let me tarry a little (speaking to one in the foresaid Corner.)

 Δ . Tell me who you are?

... I pray you let me play with you a little, and I will tell you who I am.

 Δ . In the name of Jesus then tell me.

... I rejoyce in the name of Jesus, and I am a poor little *Maiden*, Madini, I am the last but one of my Mother's children, I have little Baby-children at home.

 Δ . Where is your home?

MA... I dare not tell you where I dwell, I shall be beaten.

Δ. You shall not be beaten for telling the truth to them that love the truth, to the eternal truth all Creatures must be obedient.

 $\mbox{\sc MA}$. . . I warrant you I will be obedient. My Sisters say they must all come and dwell with you.

 Δ . I desire that they who love God should dwell with me, and I with them.

MA...I love you now you talke of God.

Δ. Your eldest sister her name is Esémeli.

MA... My sister is not so short as you make her.

Δ. O, I cry you, mercy, she is to be pronounced Eseméli.

E.K. She smileth, one calls her saying, Come away Maiden.

MA . . . I will read over my Gentlewoemen first. My Master Dee will teach me, if I say amisse.

 Δ . Read over your Gentlewoemen as it pleaseth you.

MA ... I have Gentlemen and Gentlewoemen, Look you here.

E.K. She bringeth a little book out of her pocket . . . She pointeth to a *Picture* in the book.

MA... Is not this a pretty man?

 Δ . What is his name?

MA. My . . . saith, his name is Edward, Look you, he hath a Crown upon his head, my Mother saith, that this man was Duke of York.

E.K. She looketh upon a Picture in the Book with a *Coronet* in his hand and *Crowne* upon his head.

It was Edward VI of England. Madini then finds a picture of Henry VIII in her book.

MA . . . Here is a grim Lord, He maketh me afraid. $\Delta.$ Why does he make you afraid?

MA. He is a stern fellow . . .

She turned over more pages of this book, and found other gentlemen and gentlewoman. She told Kelley that her sister had torn out two leaves and that she would bring them when they had supped. This part of the dialogue concludes with Dee's saying, 'We were earnestly called for to Supper by my folks'.

There are in all nineteen Calls or Keys; the first two conjure the element of 'Spirit'; the next sixteen invoke the Four Elements, earth, fire, air, water; the nineteenth Call or Key invokes any of the thirty Aethyrs or Aires. The whole nineteen were dictated to Kelley in the angels' own language called Enochian. As if Enochian is not obscure enough, the Calls had to be dictated backwards. And each word was dictated backwards. For example, piaood is really dooaip. The reason given for this backward procedure is that direct communication would have been too powerful, and would have conjured forces which, to say the least, were not wanted at the time.

As Kelley gazed into the shewstone, he saw the angel Nalvage, or Gabriel, with a table of letters and a wand. Kelley called out, 'He points to column six, rank thirty-one', and so on. Dee, who had a copy of the same table before him, picked out the letter in the square in question, and promptly wrote it down. The collection of these tables is entitled *Liber Logaeth*.

In due course, Kelley was told the names of all thirty Aethyrs and those of the angels that govern them. The dominion of the Aethyrs 'extendeth in ever-widening circles without and beyond the Watch Towers of the Universe'. The Watch Towers are cubes of infinite magnitude.

Madariatza das perifa Lil (the name of the first Aethyr) cahisa micaolazoda saanire caosago od fifisa balzodizodarasa Iaida. Nonuca gohulime: Micama adoianu Mada faoda beliorebe, soba ooaona cahisa luciftias peripesol, das aberaasasa nonucafe netaaibe caosaji od tilabe adapehaheta damepelozoda, tooata nonucafe jimicalazodoma larasada tofejilo marebe yareryo Idoigo (the name of the angel of the first Aethyr); od torezodulape . . .

It would be tedious to quote the whole of the nineteenth Call in the original language, but the translation runs thus:

O ye Heavens which dwell in the first Aire, ye are mighty in the parts of the Earth, and execute therein the Judgement of the Highest. Unto you it is said: Behold the Face of your God, the beginning of Comfort, whose eyes are the brightness of the Heavens, which provided you for the Government of the Earth. and her unspeakable variety, furnishing you with the power of understanding to dispose of all things according to the Foresight of Him that Sitteth on the Holy Throne, and rose up in the Beginning, saying: The Earth, let her be governed by her parts; and let there be Division in her, that the glory of her may be always drunken and vexed in itself. Her course, let it run with the Heavens, and as an handmaid let her serve them. One season, let it confound another, and let there be no Creature upon or within her the same. All her members, let them differ in their qualities, and let there be no one Creature equal with another. The reasonable Creatures of the Earth, and Men, let them vex and weed out one another. And their dwelling-places, let them forget their Names. The work of man and his pomp, let them be defaced. His building, let them be a Cave for the Beast of the Field. Confound her understanding with darkness. For why? It repenteth me concerning the Virgin and the Man. One while let her be known, and another while a stranger: because she is the bed of the Harlot, and the dwelling place of him that is fallen. O ye Heavens, arise! The lower heavens underneath you, let them serve you. Govern those that govern! Cast down such as fall. Bring forth with those that increase, and destroy the rotten. No place let it remain in one number. Add and diminish until the stars be numbered. Arise, move and appear before the Covenant of His mouth, which He hath sworn unto us in His Justice. Open the Mysteries of your Creation, and make us partakers of the undefiled Knowledge.

This is not very 'angelic'; it contains too much resentment and too many threats. Surprisingly, its style and much of its matter are similar to the style and matter of *The Book of the Law* which was written three hundred years later. In fact, Edward Kelley seems a similar sort of chap to Aleister Crowley.

The nineteenth Call, which can invoke any of the Aethyrs or Aires (realms) was used by Crowley in Mexico in 1900, when he invoked the first two Aethyrs. (As everything connected with

Enochian is backwards, he worked the thirtieth and the twenty-ninth; he did not proceed to the twenty-eighth Aethyr, for his grade in the Great White Brotherhood at that time, 1900, did not, he said, permit him to go farther. But by 1909, things were different, he was now an advanced adept, a Master of the Temple).

Crowley was his own scryer; if there were any angels to be seen, he wanted to see them himself, not through Neuburg. His golden topaz, set in the centre of his wooden Calvary Cross, was his shewstone. 'I held this, as a rule, in my hand. After choosing a spot where I was not likely to be disturbed, I would take this stone and recite the Enochian Key, and, after satisfying myself that the invoked forces were actually present, made the topaz play a part not unlike that of the looking-glass in the case of *Alice*.' He would not only see angels in the topaz, but enter the topaz as Alice enters the looking-glass or as Madini stepped out of Dee's shewstone into his study, and walked about among his books.

As if Crowley thought that this was not quite clear, he added:

I had learned not to trouble myself to travel to any desired place in the astral body. I realized that Space was not a thing-in-itself, merely a convenient category (one of many such) by reference to which we can distinguish objects from each other. When I say I was in any Aethyr, I simply mean in the state characteristic of, and peculiar to, its nature. My senses would thus receive the subtle impressions which I had trained them to record, so becoming cognizant of the phenomena of those worlds as ordinary men are of this. I would describe what I saw and repeat what I heard, and Frater O.V. would write down my words and incidentally observe any phenomena which struck him as peculiar.

This contradicts the first statement about his playing a part not unlike that of Alice, but of course he only projected his psyche into the Aethyr, leaving his physical body on earth.

Here is the beginning of the Thirtieth Aethyr which is called TEX (as described by Perdurabo at the age of twenty-five in Mexico City during 1900): 'I am in a vast crystal cube in the form of the Great God Harpocrates. This cube is surrounded by a sphere. About me are four archangels in black robes . . .'

The sphere is an Aethyr. The vast cube is a Watch Tower; that

1 The actual shew-stone or crystal which was brought to Dr Dee, through his window, by the angel Uriel, is in the British Museum, on exhibition in the Department of Mediaeval and Later Antiquities.

is to say a pylon or portal to the Aethyr beyond. The operator has to satisfy the guardians of the Watch Tower that he is an eligible person; he does so by giving the appropriate name required by the guardians. Harpocrates or Hoor-Paar-Kraat is the Egyptian god of silence whom Crowley had invoked to make himself invisible.

The cube within a sphere is the squaring of the circle, that is to say a symbol of the Great Work; it breaks down the original chaotic unity, the circle, into the four elements, and then combines them again in a higher unity. The four archangels are guardians of the threshold, to use a Theosophical expression.

Crowley progressed from the square, the Watch Tower, to the sphere, the Aethyr, the higher unity which provided a womb-like setting for him.

Since Crowley has, in this Thirtieth Aethyr, regressed, so to speak, to a state of non-existence, the action of the vision must either conclude or be continued by someone else. It is therefore not surprising that his 'Father' should appear. The scene is one of sadness and guilt.

'Lift up your heads, O Houses of Eternity: for my Father goeth forth to judge the World. One Light, let it become a thousand, and one sword ten thousand, that no man hide him from my Father's eye in the Day of Judgement of my God. Let the Gods hide themselves: let the Angels be troubled and flee away: for the Eye of My Father is open, and the Book of the Aeons is fallen.'

This is the destruction of the universe, for the father has become Shiva and he has opened his (third) eye.

'Arise! Arise! Let the Light of the Sight of Time be extinguished; let the Darkness cover all things: for my Father goeth forth to seek a spouse to replace her who is fallen and defiled.'

The defiled and cast-off woman is, in the first place, Crowley's mother as seen by her loveless child.

The visions were experienced, recorded, published, and forgotten; and after Crowley's death, his American followers collected them together and republished them, with Crowley's textual notes consisting of Cabbalistic and other correspondences. But what are these visions about? What do they describe? Crowley had no ambitions, no personal problems, no moral reflections and no qualms; he was merely driven on, flooding everything with his

1 C. G. Jung, Psychology and Alchemy.

presence. They are not, strictly speaking, visions at all, but phantasies; they lack the numinous or authoritative quality of genuine visions, and they left Crowley exactly where he started.

Perdurabo now returned to the scene; he was born or reborn in the guise which, in fact, he adopted in real life, that of the *enfant terrible* who spreads consternation about him.

'Tremble ye, O Pillars of the Universe, for Eternity is in travail of a Terrible Child; she shall bring forth an universe of Darkness, whence shall leap forth a spark that shall put his father to flight.

'The Obelisks are broken; the stars have rushed together: the Light hath plunged into the Abyss: the Heavens are mixed with Hell.'

This is Crowley in his megalomanic phase, the reverse of the phase of guilt.

The destruction of the universe and the mixing up of heaven and hell should be the end of the vision: nothing more is left to destroy. It is all terror. But Crowley cannot leave it at that. Guilt assails him again.

'Oh Lord God, let Thy Spirit hither unto me!

'For I am lost in the night of infinite pain: no hope: no God: no resurrection: no end: I fall: I fear.'

Thus ends the vision of the Thirtieth Aethyr. If there was a moral to it, Crowley failed to see it. He was the guilty one but he refused to confess because he did not accept the Christian view of penitence. He merely prepared himself in the next 'vision' to state his guilt again; he was quite obsessional.

'The sky appears covered with stars of gold; the background is of green. But the impression is also of darkness.

'An immense eagle-angel is before me. His wings seem to hide all the Heaven.'

This is the starting-point of the Twenty-ninth Aethyr which is called RII, the second and last that Crowley invoked in Mexico, on the threshold of his career as a magician. What did the angel say to him this time? Like the angel of the Thirtieth Aethyr, he was full of rage so that one can hardly distinguish him from the devil. Destruction poured down from the skies and God's mercy was lost in the great deep. The very mountains were razed.

The seer turned away his gaze, and lo, in the south, he saw a lion. It was wounded and perplexed.

The lion is a dangerous animal, a symbol, like the dragon, of

the unconscious. In a footnote, Crowley tells us, with more truth than he was aware of, that the lion is the Beast 666, that is himself. It opened its mouth and announced that it was death.

Then, in the west, appeared a white bull. It had a crimson mouth and eyes of sapphire; Crowley thought it stood for Jesus or Osiris whom he called 'dying gods'. I should say it was more the Whore of Babylon, the sensual and all-devouring mother who fascinated and held Crowley in her grip all his life long.

'He' spake; It is finished! My mother hath unveiled herself!

'My sister hath violated herself! The life of things hath disclosed its Mystery.'

The vision concluded with the crucifixion of a child on the bosom of its mother, a picture of Crowley's own fate. 'For this child riseth up within his Mother and doth crucify himself within her bosom. He extended his arms in the arms of his Mother and the Light becometh fivefold.'

This fivefold light is the five points of the pentagram, the seal of magic and the key to the mysteries; it is the fruit of his sacrifice.

Thus ended the vision of the Twenty-ninth Aethyr.

As Crowley tramped, with Neuburg, through the desert, he invoked the Aethyrs at convenient times and places at the rate of about one a day. By the time he reached Bou-Saada on 30 November, he had arrived at the Twentieth Aethyr; he started again through the desert on 8 December and reached Biskra on the 16th. His tour of the Aethyrs concluded on 19 December.

The Twenty-eighth Aethyr, which is called BAG, was the first of the new series which he invoked in the North African desert with Neuburg. As usual, the devil looked out of the stone; his face was black and his eyes white without any pupil or iris. 'The face is very terrible indeed to look upon,' said Crowley.

And the angel cried out, 'O man, who art thou that wouldst penetrate the Mystery? for it is hidden unto the End of Time.'

Instead of replying to the question, Crowley began to argue about the nature of time, which should have made this so-called angel furious. By this stratagem Crowley broke the veil and entered the Aethyr where he saw the angel as he was. 'His garment is black beneath the opal veils, but it is lined with white, and he has the shining belly of a fish, and enormous wings of black and white feathers, and innumerable little legs and claws like a centipede, and a long tail like a scorpion. The breasts are human, but

1 The bull.

they are all scored with blood.' The details of this angel fail to make him terrible; they turn him only into something rather silly, like the creature in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*.

It would take too long to describe Crowley's tour of all the Aethyrs; besides, they are largely repetitive. However, the Tenth Aethyr, which is called ZAX, and which is guarded by that terrible demon Choronzon, should be described, for it is the most dramatic of the series. Kelley called Choronzon 'that mighty devil'. Crowley, forewarned, took special precautions before evoking him. He was not, it seems, so much afraid for his own safety as for his scribe's. As Neuburg was not going to accompany him to the Aethyr, he evidently expected Choronzon to return with him to earth.

Crowley described the Tenth Aethyr as accursed, and before beginning the evocation, he marked out amid the dunes a magic circle to protect Omnia Vincam, and he fortified it with the holy names of God: Tetragrammaton and Shaddai El Chai and Ararita. Then he traced nearby a triangle in which he inscribed the name of this terrible demon Choronzon, the Dweller in the Abyss. And along the sides of the triangle he wrote Anaphaxeton, Anaphaneton, and Primeumaton, more names of the God of all the Heavenly Host, one on each side to deter Choronzon from breaking out of the triangle if ever he should be conjured into it. And in the three angles, Crowley wrote MI-CA-EL (Michael), the Holy Archangel.

These devices follow the method of conjuration which is laid down by the *Lemegeton* of Solomon for calling forth the princes of evil, but he did not intend to use the words of the conjuration.

The magicians had brought three pigeons with them from Bou-Saada, and Crowley proceeded to cut their throats, one at each angle of the triangle. The sand quickly absorbed the blood. Then Neuburg entered the circle and swore this solemn oath before his guide and master, Frater Perdurabo:

I, Omnia Vincam, a Probationer of the A:A:, hereby solemnly promise upon my magical honour, and swear by Adonai the angel that guardeth me, that I will defend this magic circle of Art with thoughts and words and deeds. I promise to threaten with the Dagger and command back into the triangle, the spirit incontinent, if he should strive to escape from it; and to strike with a Dagger at anything that may seek to enter this Circle, were it in appearance the body of the Seer

himself. And I will be exceeding wary, armed against force and cunning; and I will preserve with my life the inviolability of this Circle, Amen.

And I summon mine Holy Guardian Angel to witness this mine oath, the which if I break, may I perish, forsaken of him. Amen and Amen.

Then Crowley entered the triangle which he described as a 'secret place where is neither sight nor hearing', and sat in the 'Thunderbolt' posture of Hathayoga. He was clad in a black robe with a hood which covered his head completely, but he could see through the eye-slits.

This is the only recorded instance of a magician's seating himself in the triangle of exorcism instead of remaining within the protection of the magic circle. It was to invite obsession by the demon when he was evoked into the triangle. Because of this foolhardy action, it has been suggested that Crowley was obsessed for the rest of his life by the Demon Choronzon. I do not agree with this; the obsession was much earlier, and before Choronzon there was Aiwass.

The ceremony began with Neuburg's performing the banishing rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram, the five- and six-pointed stars of magic. These were commands to evil spirits or unwanted influences to depart from within the precincts of the circle. Of these short preliminary rituals Crowley observed that if they are successful in achieving their aim, the magician will experience a feeling of cleanliness in the atmosphere.

When he had finished the banishing rituals, Neuburg then used the Pentagram and Hexagram rituals to invoke the archangels and their host to act as guardians of the circle; he would know that they were there by experiencing a feeling of holiness.

Having finished this, Neuburg began to mutter Crowley's translation of the Exorcism of Honorius.

O Lord, deliver me from hell's great fear and gloom! Loose thou my spirit from the larvae of the tomb! I seek them in their dread abodes without affright: On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

I bid the night conceive the glittering hemisphere. Arise, O sun, arise! O moon shine white and clear! I seek them in their dread abodes without affright: On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

Their faces and their shapes are terrible and strange. These devils by my might to angels I will change. Of nameless horrors I address without affright: On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

These are the phantoms pale of mine astonied view, Yet none but I their blasted beauty can renew; For to the abyss of hell I plunge without affright: On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

Omnia Vincam was by now in a fearless frame of mind; if Choronzon, that first and deadliest of all the powers of evil, attempted to seize him, there was his magic dagger with which to ward him off, also his magic wand. Crowley had urged Neuburg to strike fearlessly at anything that sought to break into the circle 'were it the appearance of the Seer himself', and this he had sworn to do. Crowley had also warned him not to lean beyond the circle. (Neuburg, like Crowley, was squatting on the sand in his magical robe.)

'There is no-being in the outermost Abyss,' said Crowley, beginning to tell the Scribe what he saw in the topaz, 'but constant forms come forth from the nothingness of it'. This state of indecision did not last for long. Suddenly the spirit of the Aethyr, that mighty devil Choronzon, sprang forth, crying aloud:

'Zazas, Zazas, Nasatanada Zazas!'

These words, observed Crowley, are from some vision of old time; by them, Adam was said to have opened the gates of hell. Traditionally, they are the words which open the Abyss.

Choronzon, who is not at this stage described, but who must have been terrible to look upon, then began to make a speech. (He was still within the topaz.)

I am the Master of Form, and from me all forms proceed.

I am I. I have shut myself up from the spendthrifts, my gold is safe in my treasure-chamber, and I have made every living thing my concubine, and none shall touch them, save only I. And yet I am scorched, even while I shiver in the wind. He hateth me and tormenteth me. He would have stolen me from myself, but I shut myself up and mock at him, even while he plagueth me. From me come leprosy and pox and plague and cancer and cholera and the falling sickness.

He is remarkably like Crowley who had also made every living thing his concubine, and like Crowley he has feelings of guilt. Out of impotent rage, he contemplates his revenge. Crowley, aware of the similarity – he is, of course, fascinated by Choronzon – notes that Choronzon is imitating his voice. As both Choronzon and Crowley were in the triangle, this is not surprising.

Crowley called out to Brother Omnia Vincam who had, so to speak, barricaded himself in the circle, 'I don't think I can get any more, I think that's all there is.'

But this matter-of-fact information was lost on Victor Neuburg, the Scribe; he was by now hallucinated and believed that he could see in the triangle not Brother Perdurabo, his friend and guide, but a beautiful courtesan, a woman he had loved in Paris. It is not clear why he should think this. The most probable explanation is that this was a manifestation of Choronzon.

The beautiful courtesan began to woo Neuburg with soft words and glances, but he knew these things to be delusions and the snare of Choronzon who wanted him to leave the protection of the circle.

Suddenly Neuburg heard a loud, wild laugh, and Choronzon, evoked to visible appearance, appeared in the magic triangle. Neuburg urged him to continue with the discourse. Choronzon did so.

They have called me the god of laughter, and I laugh when I will slay. And they have thought that I could not smile, but I smile upon whom I would seduce, O inviolable one, that canst not be tempted. If thou canst command me by the power of the Most High, know that I did indeed tempt thee, and it repenteth me. I bow myself humbly before the great and terrible names whereby thou hast conjured and constrained me. But thy name is mercy, and I cry aloud for pardon. Let me come and put my head beneath thy feet, that I may serve thee. For if thou commandest me to obedience in the Holy names, I cannot swerve therefrom, for their first whispering is greater than the noise of all the tempests. Bid me therefore come unto thee upon my hands and knees that I may adore thee, and partake of thy forgiveness. Is not thy mercy infinite?

Choronzon was appealing to his pride, but Neuburg would have none of it, and he commanded the demon to depart.

At this point in the narrative, Crowley interpolates that Choronzon has no form, because he is the maker of all form 'and so

rapidly he changeth from one to the other as he may best think fit to seduce those whom he hateth, the servants of the Most High.'

Again, he is like Crowley; there is no Choronzon, there is only Crowley who has taken on, if you like, the form of Choronzon. It was easy for Crowley, who projected himself into every romantic role and archaic situation, to become Choronzon. On another occasion, he saw himself as a mighty king, an immense black warrior with a thousand arms. This capacity for assuming a diversity of roles, he thought proof of his versatility; it is, however, only an indication that he did not live from his own centre.

'Thus taketh he,' said Crowley of the demon Choronzon, 'the form of a beautiful woman, or of a wise and holy man, or of a serpent that writheth upon the earth ready to sting.'

Neuburg now began to take down what Choronzon was saying, a difficult thing to do, even with high-speed shorthand, because the voice of the Dweller of the Abyss had become an 'insane babble of a multitude of senseless ejaculations.'

Choronzon was

the terror of darkness, and the blindness of night, and the deafness of the adder, and the tastelessness of stale and stagnant water, and the black fire of hatred, and the udders of the Cat of Slime; not one thing but many things. Yet, with all that, his torment is eternal. The sun burns him as he writhes naked upon the sands of hell, and the wind cuts him bitterly to the bone, a harsh dry wind, so that he is sore athirst.

In the guise of Brother Perdurabo, but divested of his black robe, he was now crawling towards the circle to beg the Scribe to give him just 'one drop of water from the pure springs of paradise, that I may quench my thirst.'

The water should be considered symbolically. It is the water of life which Choronzon wants.

Neuburg refused, of course.

The entreaty was repeated. 'Sprinkle water on my head. I can hardly go on,' said Choronzon.

Neuburg still refused and conjured the demon, by the names of the Most High, to proceed.

A long argument followed and in the course of it the Scribe cursed Choronzon by the Holy Names of God and the power of the Pentagram.

Choronzon, unabashed, replied:

I feed upon the names of the Most High. I churn them in my jaws, and I void them from my fundament. I fear not the power of the Pentagram, for I am the Master of the Triangle. My name is three hundred and thirty and three, and that is thrice one. Be vigilant, therefore, for I warn thee that I am about to deceive thee. I shall say words that thou wilt take to be the cry of the Aethyr, and thou wilt write them down, thinking them to be great secrets of Magick power, and they will be only my jesting with thee.

Now Neuburg's resistance began to fail and, in fear, he invoked Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, to come to his assistance. It was ridiculous for Neuburg to have done this, as if he had no Holy Guardian Angel of his own, especially as Crowley had let loose Choronzon upon him. It shows how obsessed Neuburg was with Crowley.

As soon as Choronzon heard the name of Aiwass, he cried out, 'I know the name of the Angel of thee and thy Brother Perdurabo, and all thy dealings with him are but a cloak for thy filthy sorceries.'

Neuburg's courage began to return and he told the demon that he knew more than he, and so feared him not. And again he ordered him to depart.

'Thou canst tell me naught that I know not,' replied Choronzon, 'for in me is all Knowledge: Knowledge is my name. Is not the head of the great Serpent arisen into Knowledge?'

The allusion is a Cabbalistic one. The head of the Serpent of Knowledge, when twined round the Tree of Life, rests in Daath, the false Sephira in the Abyss.

'Get on with the Call,' ordered the Scribe, as if he were talking to Crowley and not the devil.

Instead of obeying, Choronzon started to argue in a speech which was a mere subterfuge.

The Scribe threatened him with anger and pain and hell, to which Choronzon replied in his archaic manner of speech, 'Thinkest thou, O fool, that there is any anger and any pain that I am not, or any hell but this my spirit?'

Crowley, we are told, was taking no part in this argument; he was still seated in the Thunderbolt posture, withdrawn from (and probably with his back to) the disputants; but we are also told

1 Cabbalistically interpreted 333 stands for 'lack of control', 'dispersion' which is certainly characteristic of Choronzon.

that at one stage of the struggle, Choronzon assumed the guise of Crowley to outwit the Scribe. And who was who must have seemed only an academic point to Neuburg confronted by a naked demon in human form who was raving his head off.

This is what Crowley said of the mind of Choronzon: 'Images, images, images, all without control, all without reason . . . for there is no centre, nay, nothing but Dispersion.'

Earlier, Crowley said of Choronzon that he 'cannot fix his mind upon one thing for any length of time.' It was equally true of the mind of Crowley.

The demon now turned to Crowley and addressed him in the same unbridled tone: 'O thou that hast written two-and-thirty books of Wisdom, and art more stupid than an owl, by thine own talk is thy vigilance wearied, and by my talk art thou befooled and tricked, O thou that sayest that thou shalt endure.'

Choronzon then turned to the Scribe and said:

Knowest thou how nigh thou art to destruction? For thou that art the Scribe hast not the understanding that alone availeth against Choronzon. And wert thou not protected by the Holy Names of God and the circle, I would rush upon thee and tear thee. For when I made myself like unto a beautiful woman, if thou hadst come to me, I would have rotted thy body with the pox and thy liver with cancer. And if I had seduced thy pride, and thou hadst bidden me to come into the circle, I would have trampled thee under foot, and for a thousand years shouldst thou have been but one of the tape-worms that is in me. And if I had seduced thy pity, and thou hadst poured one drop of water without the circle, then would I have blasted thee with flame. But I was not able to prevail against thee.

Growing rather gloomy, as if he had realized that all his talk had led him nowhere, he wished he was dead.

Another long speech followed; it concluded lamentably with '... my will is broken, and my fierceness is marred by fear, and I must ever speak, speak, speak, millions of mad voices in my brain.'

Choronzon broke out into another torrent of obscene blasphemy, and while the Scribe was writing it down as best he could and had his eyes glued on to the page of his note-book, he began to throw sand from the triangle into the circles so that a gap was made in the circumference.

His obscenities began to run out, and in order to keep up the torrent of words, he started to recite the ballad *Tom o'Bedlam*:

Forth from my sad and darksome Cell, Or from the deep Abiss of Hell, Mad Tom is come to view the World again, To see if he can ease his distemper'd Brain: Fear and Care doth pierce the Soul: Hark! how the angry Furies howl, Pluto laughs, and Proserpine is glad, To see poor naked Tom of Bedlam mad. Through the World I wander Night and Day, To find my stragling Senses. 1

The circle was now broken and Choronzon, in the form of a naked savage, leapt from his triangle into the circle and fell upon Victor Neuburg, throwing him to the ground. 'He flung him to earth,' said Crowley, 'and tried to tear out his throat with his froth-covered fangs.'

But Omnia Vincam invoked the names of God, and struck at Choronzon with his magic dagger. The demon was cowed and writhed back to the triangle. O.V. then repaired the circle.

In Crowley's *Book Four*, we are told that the magical dagger is used to calm too great heat; it is made of steel inlaid with gold; the hilt is also of gold. The magical dagger 'expresses the determination to sacrifice all'.

Choronzon immediately turned into a beautiful woman and again there was an unsuccessful seduction scene.

The demon then begged O.V. for permission to leave the triangle to get some clothes to cover his nakedness, but O.V. sternly refused him. Choronzon raved and threatened and finally admitted his impotence.

I have prevailed against the Kingdom of the Father, and befouled his beard; and I have prevailed against the Kingdom of the Son; but against the Kingdom of the Holy Ghost shall I strive and not prevail. The three slain doves² are my threefold blasphemy against him; but their blood shall make fertile the sand; and I writhe in blackness and horror of hate, and prevail not.

1 From a broadsheet entitled, New Mad Tom of Bedlam or the Man in the Moon drinks Claret, with Powder-Beef, Turnip and Carret, Circa 1670.

2 The dove is the symbol of the Holy Ghost.

He made one final effort to overcome the Scribe; he sneered at magic and tried to persuade O.V. that magic (and especially *magick*, Crowley's brand) was all rubbish. But he had no success.

All the energy in the pigeons' blood was now exhausted by the successive phantoms which had appeared, and it could no longer give form to the forces evoked. The triangle which had contained Choronzon was empty; the operation was now at an end.

'In this Aethyr is neither beginning nor end, for it is all hotchpotch, because it is of the wicked on earth and the damned in hell. And so long as it be hotch-potch, it mattereth little what may be written by the sea-green incorruptible Scribe.'

A fire was kindled to purify the place, and the circle and the triangle were obliterated.

IT was Neuburg who, out of his need for submission, became the willing victim of Crowley's magical experiments; he also replenished Crowley's empty coffer. 'I cannot say what he looked like,' wrote Crowley of Neuburg, 'because when God made him, He broke the mould.'

The roles of the two men were complementary: the one was looking for pupils; the other was seeking a Master.

More expensively bound books of verse by Crowley now began to appear: Amphora, 'Privately Printed for the Authoress and her intimates'; The World's Tragedy (his first autobiographical essay); The Winged Beetle; Ambergris, etc. Crowley described 1908 as his annus mirabilis in poetry. He also published at this time his erotic poems Clouds Without Water (by the Rev C. Verey. 'Privately printed for circulation among ministers of religion'.)

The preface to Ambergris revealed his frustration.

In response to a widely-spread lack of interest in my writings, I have consented to publish a small and unrepresentative selection from the same. . . . The selection has been made by a committee of seven competent persons, sitting separately. Only those poems have been included which obtained a majority vote. This volume, thus almost ostentatiously democratic, is therefore now submitted to the British Public with the fullest confidence that it will be received with exactly the same amount of acclamation as that to which I have become accustomed.

The year 1909 also saw the publication of the first number of *The Equinox*, subtitled *The Review of Scientific Illuminism*. These bulky volumes appeared twice a year, at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. They were not a review of illuminism, scientific or otherwise, but an account of the activities and aims of Aleister Crowley. '*The Equinox*,' he said, 'was the first serious attempt to put before the public the facts of Occult Science, so-called, since Blavatsky's unscholarly hotch-potch of facts and fable, *Isis Unveiled*.'

Since his break with Mathers, he had had the ambition to

possess an order of his own. He acquired one in this way: the Golden Dawn was an occult brotherhood divided into three parts. of which only the first, or Outer Order, carried the title of the Golden Dawn. When members reached the $5^{\circ} = 6^{\circ}$ grade, they passed into the Order of the Red Rose and Golden Cross, the highest grade of which was $7^{\circ} = 4^{\circ}$. (Mathers was a $7^{\circ} = 4^{\circ}$.) The three remaining grades of the whole hierarchy, Magister Templi (Master of the Temple) $8^{\circ} = 3^{\circ}$, Magus $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$, and Ipsissimus 10° = 1° came within the Order of the Silver Star. Ordo Argentei Astri; but these last three grades were of such an exalted nature that only the Secret Chiefs themselves had attained to them. Now, after Crowley had performed in China that ceremony which he called Augoeides, the morning light, the dawn - it coincided with a phase which he described as a state of temporary madness - the gods had beckoned him to ascend to the grade of Master of the Temple, although he did not formally accept that grade until 1909. In fact, he was, from 1906 onwards, one of these Secret Chiefs, with a mystic order at his elbow, the Silver Star, or the A: A: as it was called. And this Order, which he had reconstructed in 1907, he announced to the world in the first number of The Equinox (March 1909). With the publication of his occult journal, Crowley swallowed MacGregor Mathers whole. 'It is necessary, my dear brothers, to give you a clear idea of the interior Order; of that illuminated community which is scattered throughout the world, but which is governed by one truth and united in one spirit. This community possesses a School, in which all who thirst for knowledge are instructed by the Spirit of Wisdom itself; and all the mysteries of nature are preserved in this school for the children of light. Perfect knowledge of nature and of humanity is taught in this school. It is from her that all truths penetrate into the world . . .'

And so on.

Through the volumes of *The Equinox* runs an account, in high-flown language, of Crowley's magical biography, *The Temple of Solomon the King*. The author was Brother Per Ardua or Captain Fuller; Crowley undoubtedly assisted in the composition as well as supplying the information.

Just before the third number of *The Equinox* was due to appear MacGregor Mathers obtained an injunction to restrain Crowley from publishing. Mathers asserted that the secrets of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, over which he claimed proprietory rights, were being given out to the world in the pages of this

149

journal. It was true; *The Temple of Solomon the King* contains literal transcriptions of the secret rites which Crowley, at his initiation, had so solemnly sworn to preserve.

To Mathers's relief and Crowley's surprise, Mr Justice Bucknill confirmed the injunction. Crowley ascribed this to the fact that Bucknill happened to be an eminent freemason 'and though he had no idea of what the fuss was about, it seemed to him, on general principles, that nobody ought to be allowed to publish anything which anyone else might wish to keep dark'. Crowley gave notice of appeal, and before the case came up in the Appeal Court, he made sure of success by consecrating an Abra-Melin talisman 'to acquire the affection of a judge'. The case was heard before Lords Justices Williams, Moulton and Farwell. Crowley won his appeal and the previous decision was reversed.

This was Crowley's last skirmish with MacGregor Mathers. In the next few years, with the publication of further numbers of *The Equinox*, in which there were more instalments of *The Temple of Solomon the King*, most of the remaining rituals of the G∴D∴ were divulged to the profane. In 1918, Mathers died in the influenza epidemic; it was said that Crowley killed him.

The Equinox was mainly filled with writings from Crowley's unquenchable pen. Fuller, Neuburg, Ethel Archer (who, in 1933, published a novel about Crowley and Neuburg called The Hieroglyph), George Raffalovich, Frank Harris, and Meredith Starr (like Neuburg a minor poet) were some of the other contributors. By 1913, the list of members of the A:A: adds up to the surprising number of eighty-eight, among whom were Miss Nina Hamnett, artist; Miss Gwendoline Otter ('expelled'); Count Louis Hamon, better known as Cheiro, the palmist ('owes us £4 4s 0d'); and a certain Miss Florence P— ('Must marry or go mad').

Neuburg was on the list with the comment against his name: 'An imbecile with no moral feeling.'

Crowley used in his Silver Star the rituals and teachings of the Golden Dawn; the magical weapons of the A:A: - sword, wand, cup, bell, burin¹ – were consecrated in the tradition of the G:D:, and he used their pentagram ritual for banishing hostile spirits, or merely an unwanted current.

His headquarters were at 124 Victoria Street, London. From this address *The Equinox* was published. Here the brothers and

1 The tool with which the magician engraves, usually in wax, the magical signs and symbols on his pantacle or talisman.

sisters of the A:A: gathered and were put through their magical paces.

On one occasion the God came to us in human form (we were working in a locked temple) and remained with us, perfectly perceptible to all our senses, for the best part of an hour, only vanishing when we were physically exhausted by the ecstasy of intimate¹ contact with His divine person. We sank into a sort of sublime stupor; when we came to ourselves, He was gone. Again, at Victoria Street, a number of us were dancing round the altar with linked hands and faces turned outwards. The temple was dimly lighted and thick with incense. Somehow the circle was broken, and we kept on dancing, each for himself. Then we became aware of the presence of a stranger. Some of us counted the men present, and found there was one too many. One of the weaker brethren got scared, or one of the stronger brethren remembered his duty to science – I don't know which—and switched on the light. No stranger was to be seen.

The mysterious leader of the A.A., Brother V.V.V.V.² (the initials of his motto for his grade of Master of the Temple), otherwise known as Sir Aleister Crowley (he was knighted, he said, for his efforts on behalf of the Carlist cause³), could easily be recognised by a single lock of hair on the forehad of his otherwise shaved head, the symbol of the Sun's vicegerent; in other words the phallus. Apart from this eccentric coiffure, Crowley's handsome face had glided away into flabbiness, and his athletic frame had adorned itself with a paunch.

Oliver Haddo, the hero of Somerset Maugham's novel, *The Magician*, is described as a big stout fellow with a taste for wildlooking clothes. This novel gave Crowley considerable gratification.

1 i.e. sexual contact; they were also drugged.

2 Vi Veri Vniversum Vivus Vici: 'By the force of truth, I, while living,

have conquered the universe.'

3 The question of Crowley's knighthood is an obscure one. 'I obtained the honour of Knighthood from one of Don Carlos's lieutenants.' How a lieutenant of that unhappy and unsuccessful pretender could confer a knighthood, I do not know. However, Crowley won the honour in this way: 'I actually joined a conspiracy on behalf of Don Carlos, obtained a commission to work a machine gun, took pains to make myself a first-class rifle shot and studied drill, tactics, and strategy.'

151

Late in 1908, I picked up a book. The title attracted me strongly, The Magician. The author, bless my soul! No other than my old and valued friend, William Somerset Maugham, my nice young doctor whom I remembered so well from the dear old days of the Chat Blanc. So he had really written a book - who would have believed it! ... the Magician, Oliver Haddo, was Aleister Crowley; his house 'Skene' was Boleskine. The hero's witty remarks were, many of them, my own. ... But I had jumped too hastily to conclusions when I said 'Maugham has written a book'. I found phrase after phrase, paragraph after paragraph, page after page, bewilderingly familiar; and then I remembered that in my early days of the Golden Dawn I had introduced Gerald Kelly to the Order, and recommended him a selection of books on Magick. I reflected that Maugham had become a great friend of Kelly, and stayed with him at Camberwell vicarage. Maugham had taken some of the most private and personal incidents of my life, my marriage, my explorations, my adventures with big game, my magical opinions, ambitions and exploits and so on. ... I was not in the least offended by the attempts of the book to represent me as, in many ways, the most atrocious scoundrel, for he had done more than justice to the qualities of which I was proud. . . . The Magician was, in fact, an appreciation of my genius such as I had never dreamed of inspiring.

The first indication of the break-up of Crowley's marriage was that Rose began to drink heavily. Their marriage had not, of course, been a success; no marriage with Crowley, who styled himself the Wanderer of the Waste, could be anything but a disaster. Upon returning from Tangier in 1907, he found that Rose had run up a bill for 159 bottles of whisky in five months with one grocer alone.

The number of whisky bottles may be an exaggeration, but the reason which he adduced for Rose's dipsomania was intended as an insult to her parents. In 1909, the Crowleys divorced, after Rose had persuaded Aleister to make a small financial settlement upon their daughter, Lola.'

1 In 1909, Crowley had no money to give away but he was due to inherit £4,000 on the death of his mother. He therefore created a discretionary trust fund, the income of which, when available, was to be divided between his daughter and himself at the discretion of the trustees – George Cecil Jones and Oscar Eckenstein.

Crowley's attitude towards his wife is partly reflected in the fourth, and final, poem which was inspired by her, *Rosa Decidua*, A Fallen Rose.

Rose of the World!
If so, then what a world!
What worm at its red heart lay curled
from the beginning? Plucked and torn and trampled
And utterly corrupt is she . . .

The poem was printed and bound with a photograph of the author and family (all faintly smiling as if they are the happiest family in the world), and a copy was sent to the judge, Lord Salvesen, who had granted the *decree nisi* on evidence manufactured by Crowley.

In the autumn of 1911, Rose entered a mental hospital, or asylum as it was then called, suffering from alcoholic dementia. Her marriage with Crowley had not been a happy one; it was said that he entertained his mistresses at home and, at times, hung her up by the heels in the wardrobe.

During the spring of 1910, Crowley and Leila Waddell, his Scarlet Woman, were staying with Commander Marston in Dorset. One day they performed a ritual to evoke Bartzabel, the spirit of Mars. Their host was impressed; he suggested that they should make a public spectacle of it. The idea was developed when Crowley and Leila were performing another ritual under the influence of anhalonium. Crowley was reciting poetry, Leila was playing the fiddle 'against each other, before the Lord'.

Anhalonium (anhalonium lewinii) was first analysed and identified by the German chemist, Louis Lewin. It comes from the plant peyotl, the wonderful properties of which were known to the Indians of Central America, who worshipped it as a god. Lewin says:

No other plant brings about such marvellous functional modifications of the brain. Whereas the poppy gradually detaches the soul and the body with it from all terrestrial sensations and is capable of leading them gently to the threshold of death and setting them free, a consolation and a blessing for all those who are wearied and tormented by life, anhalonium procures for those who make use of it, by its peculiar excitation, pleasures of a special kind. Even if these sensations merely take the form of sensorial phantasms, or of an extreme concentration of the

153

inner life, they are of such a special nature and so superior to reality, so unimaginable, that the victim believes himself transported to a new world of sensibility and intelligence.

Crowley would not have agreed with Lewin on this; in his view, anhalonium (and other drugs) does enable one to ascend to the Astral Plane. Of course one must know what to do when one gets there but for this one needs a magical training.

Crowley wrote seven rites, one for each of the planets, called them the Rites of Eleusis, and put them on during seven consecutive Wednesdays at 9 pm at Caxton Hall, Westminster, in the autumn of 1910. The advertised aim of the rites was to induce in the audience a state of religious ecstasy on payment of a fee, for the course, of £5 5s.

The Eleusinian Mysteries, performed yearly at Eleusis, were the most celebrated of all the religious ceremonies of ancient Greece. The legend which formed their basis is the well-known one of the abduction of Persephone, daughter of Demeter, by Pluto. There is no connection between Crowley's Rites of Eleusis, in which Pan, the god of lust, is exalted, and the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries. In fact, the point of Crowley's rites, in line with Crowley's philosophy, is that there is no God, and that one can therefore do what one wills. The characters who, during the performance, hammer on the door of heaven, are informed that God is dead. (But Pan, apparently, is still alive.) The aim of Man, therefore, is pleasure among the living.

The room in Caxton Hall where the rites took place was dimly lit by a flickering light on an altar, and the air was heavy with incense. The audience had low stools, placed in rows, to sit on. The reporter from *The Looking Glass* found many of the stools occupied by men and women in evening dress.

Crowley in his Golden Dawn robe recited the lyrics; Leila Waddell, similarly attired, played the fiddle; Neuburg danced the dance of Pan 'in honour of our lady Artemis', and at the conclusion fell exhausted in the middle of the stage. 'I suspect he was the best of the three,' said Crowley. 'He gave the impression that he did not touch the ground at all.'

The Rites were reviewed in a hostile manner by *The Looking Glass* which described the lyrics as gibberish.

The proprietor and editor of this paper, De Wend Fenton (who, in 1913, was fined £10 for sending indecent articles through the post), hurriedly researched into Crowley's past; and in the follow-

ing issues of *The Looking Glass*, in which further Rites were reviewed, he informed his readers that Crowley had had an affair with a milliner who worked in Burlington Arcade. Crowley had also lived with 'the rascally sham Buddhist monk Allan Bennett', and under their roof 'unmentionable immoralities' had been committed. George Cecil Jones was also dragged in; the implication was that he, too, was mixed up in these unmentionable immoralities.

Captain Fuller, who was a friend of Jones as well as of Crowley, urged Crowley to sue *The Looking Glass*, but Crowley declined to do so. Bennett, meditating on the evils of existence in a Buddhist monastery in Burma, knew nothing about it and could not have cared less; but Jones, who had a wife and four children, was greatly incensed.

The case of Jones against *The Looking Glass* was heard in April 1911 before Mr Justice Scrutton and a jury. Crowley, who was not called to give evidence by either party, was described by the defence barrister as 'that loathsome and abominable creature'. Mr Justice Scrutton seemed to be rather bewildered by it all, and remarked that it was like the trial in *Alice in Wonderland*.

Crowley, indifferent to his reputation, was highly amused. 'Every few minutes some mysterious fact would crop up which I could explain better than anyone else,' he wrote. ''But surely,' the judge would murmur, "the proper person to tell the court about this is Mr Crowley. Why don't you call Mr Crowley?'' and both sides would deplore the impossibility of discovering where Mr Crowley was, though I was sitting in the court *lippis et tonsoribus notus*.'¹

The defence called Dr Berridge, a member of the Golden Dawn. In his evidence, he repeated a conversation he had had with Crowley, in which he, Berridge, had told Crowley that he had the reputation of being a sodomite.

Dr Berridge: On one occasion when Crowley was over here as an envoy on official matters concerning the Order, I had an opportunity of speaking alone with him, and I said to him: 'Do you know what they accuse you of?' – meaning the members of the Order. I will not express it too plainly as I see there are ladies in the court.

Mr Justice Scrutton: Any ladies who may be in this court probably are beyond any scruples of that sort.

1 'Well known for his bleary eyes and shaven head.'

155

Dr Berridge: Well, I said: 'They accuse you of unnatural vice', and he made a very peculiar answer: he neither admitted nor denied it.

The jury were directed by the judge to consider if the words and statements complained of by the plaintiff, Mr Jones, were in fact defamatory, and if they were defamatory, were they true, and if true, were the comments of *The Looking Glass* fair.

The jury gave their verdict in favour of the defendant.

Jones lost his case on the strength of Crowley's evil reputation, and Crowley lost the friendship of Captain Fuller; and in Fuller's wake went George Raffalovitch who had helped finance *The Equinox*.

Fuller called Crowley a coward. Crowley replied, 'Resist not evil', and he drowned his doubts in rhetoric.

Mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty; yes, thrice and four times mighty art thou. He that riseth up against thee shall be thrown down, though thou raise not so much as thy little finger against him. And he that speaketh evil against thee shall be put to shame, though thy lips utter not the littlest syllable against him...

A few years later, Crowley developed a mania for sueing people.

On 27 September 1911, Rose Kelly was certified insane. Crowley heard about it during the following month and juggled with the dates to establish that the event had some magical bearing upon his meeting Mary d'Esté Sturges, a companion of Isadora Duncan. Later, Mary took the magical name of Sister Virakam.

'Late in the evening of the 11th October, within a few minutes of midnight, he was taken by the well-known raconteur, Mr Hener Skene, to the Savoy Hotel in London, and there introduced to a Mrs Mary d'Esté Sturges.'

In her autobiography, 1927, Isadora Duncan called Hener Skene her best friend and a marvellous pianist.

'On the 13th he took tea with the lady, and returning after dinner, did not leave the suite until he had expressed (however unworthily) the nature of his feelings. On the 14th, he dined with

her, and after partaking subsequently of chocolate and rolls, left for the North of England.'1

Crowley tells us very little about Mary. The only thing that mattered from his point of view was that she was attracted to him; but from his account of her, we learn that she had been married and had a young son. Also that she had a flat in Paris where, 'after some weeks' preliminary skirmishing', he joined her. Then he carried her off to Switzerland.

She was the author of a play entitled *The Law*. The copy I read had emendations in Crowley's hand; so the lady had literary pretensions. It is a poor play but it saw at least one performance.

Crowley's relationships with women can usually be divided into two stages, the first of which ran parallel with the second, if the second stage appeared at all. In the beginning he was attracted to a woman sexually and, like Casanova, his aim was sexual conquest. Crowley's description of Mary d'Esté is that she was 'a magnificent specimen' of mixed Irish and Italian blood, and that she possessed a most powerful personality and terrific magnetism which instantly attracted my own. I sat on the floor like a Chinese god, exchanging electricity with her.' The magnetism was, of course, wholly erotic.

The second stage in Crowley's relationships with women was the clairvoyante one, but he invariably pretends that when he discovers that his mistress is also useful to him in the Great Work, that is as a seeress, no one is more surprised than he – as if he had forgotten that his main preoccupation was magick as well as sex.

Their first night together in Switzerland was spent at the National Hotel, Zürich. It was not very peaceable; indeed, Crowley described Mary's state as one of fierce hysteria, due to an excess of drink and sex. He might have added with more truth, drugs. However, the tumult suddenly subsided, and Mary sank into a profound calm and began to see things.

Fra. Perdurabo's old sceptical attitude had in no wise been weakened by the lapse of years; he attached no importance to, or interest (save artistic interest) in, what he regarded as a morbid phenomenon due to over-excitement of Bacchus and Eros, and he cannot particularize the order of the events now to be related, although he wrote them down an hour later, when they assumed an occult importance.

The lady had I think on the previous day seen in a dream the

1 The Magical Record of the Beast 666.

¹ In spite of this she married Dr Gormley whom Crowley had entertained at Boleskine.

² Virakam, Sanskrit stem rak, I construct, perform.

157

'head of the 5 White Brothers' who told her that 'it was all

right'.

This person now again appeared to her. He was an old man with a long white beard; in his hand he held a wand, and on his breast was a large claw. On his finger was a ring; this ring had a transparent glass top, and under it was a white feather or perhaps a little bird. Subsequently she described this as the feather of a bird of Paradise 'or something similar'.

As a matter of fact, Crowley was fascinated by these communications, and not for one moment did he believe that the vision – if one may call it that – was no concern of his. On the contrary, he was certain that this old man with the long white beard – the archetype of the wise old man – had a message for him; his only fear was that Mary might communicate the message imperfectly. He therefore urged her to make herself quite passive.

Mary did so, and after a while she told him that the five white

brethren were 'turning red'.

Crowley makes no comment on this surprising statement. I take it that the company of five brethren, high adepts, perhaps even Secret Chiefs, had for a reason best known to themselves, suddenly gone red in the face like turkey cocks. Alternatively, their robes may have turned red, but this is an unimportant detail.

Mary next said, 'Here is a book to be given to Frater Perdur-

abo.'

At this, Crowley sat up: Mary was unaware of his magical title of Perdurabo! Amazing.

She continued: 'The name of the Book is Aba, and its number

is four.'

More amazing still. Mary knew no Cabbala, yet according to this system the numerical value of the Hebrew letter a (aleph) is one, and that of b (beth) is two: hence Aba = 4. All this convinced Crowley that there 'might be something in this communication', as he mildly put it.

Mary also saw a black-headed Turk – he might have been an Egyptian wearing a tarbush and a red sash; his name was Jezel; one of his hands was covered with crocodile skin. Said the old gentleman with the long white beard, 'He is hunting this book but

Frater Perdurabo will get it.'

Crowley began to challenge the old man; this was a necessary precaution because figures seen in astral visions may turn out to be demons. Crowley does not mention how exactly he challenged

the old man, but it was probably by saying to him, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law!' If, at this thelemic greeting, he did not immediately vanish, he was someone to be trusted.

The seeress complained that she was not seeing properly, and she confessed that she was frightened.

The ancient one gave his name as Ab-ul-Diz.

Perdurabo then asked, through Mary, 'What about 78?' Ab-ul-Diz replied that *he* was 78.

This must have given Crowley a start for 78 is the number of Aiwass, his Holy Guardian Angel. Still challenging Ab-ul-Diz, he asked, 'What is 65?' (The number of Adni – Adonai – the Lord.)

Ab-ul-Diz replied that Perdurabo was 65, and that his age was 1400.

At this, Crowley must have had serious doubts about Virakam's capacity for scrying. He observed that, according to his Cabbalistic Dictionary, *Sepher Sephiroth*, published in number eight of *The Equinox*, 1400 is the number of Chaos!

Next, Crowley gave the password for the equinox, but this only made Ab-ul-Diz frown.

Crowley was aware that these attempts to discover the identity of Ab-ul-Diz were unsatisfactory, but Ab-ul-Diz promised to come back again in seven days' time, at eleven o'clock at night, to make everything clear; and he told Perdurabo to invoke him by the ritual of the Bornless One.

It is curious, observed Crowley, that this new revelation should come at a time when *Liber Legis* was about to be published (in *The Equinox*).

They moved on to St Moritz.

During the week's lull, Crowley talked to Mary about his magical work so as 'to avoid questions as to what she could, or could not, have known'. Confusion had to be avoided at all cost. If the Brethren wish to communicate, said Crowley, they must do so unambiguously.

He had these magical weapons with him.

1 At the spring and autumn equinoxes, Crowley would send greetings to members of the Order, and to friends. The greetings would centre round a word, taken from the 'Holy Books of Thelema', or from the gods (through the Scarlet Woman), or from one of the magical systems which Crowley worked, to express the nature of the current for the ensuing six months.

1. The Wand of Ebony, crowned with the Star Sapphire and the golden snakes. (This beautiful precious stone of transparent blue was encrusted in the top of his magic wand. The 'golden snakes', like the caduceus or wand of Hermes, probably entwined it. But could Crowley have been referring to his uraeus gold band, which he wore round his brow, the sacred Egyptian asp, an emblem of supreme power, for it appears in a photograph of Crowley enrobed which was taken at this time?)

2. The robe of a Neophyte of the Order.

3. The shewstone of graven topaz, set in a cross, described as a 'rosy cross' and hung upon a chain of gold and pearls; the same shewstone that he had used in the desert with Victor Neuburg during 1909.

4. His magic bell, described as the Bell of Electrum Magicum; that is, an alloy of the seven metals which are attributed to the

seven planets.

5. His magic ring.

To his great surprise, he found that Mary had brought with her a loose-flowing robe of blue and gold, an 'abbai' – *Aba* or *Abaya*, an Arab sack-like outer garment – such as the women of the Golden Dawn sometimes wore for the ceremonies. In this he discerned the hand of Ab-ul-Diz.

The salon of their hotel suite was adorned with a very large mirror. 'The room,' wrote Crowley, 'will be ordered in balanced

disposition with the Mirror as "East".'

Mary was dressed as indicated in *The Book of the Law*, chapter I, verse 61: '... ye shall wear rich jewels... I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich headdress.' Again he saw a deeper meaning in the blue and gold 'abbai' (the single robe) which Mary had included among her wardrobe.

On the night of 28 November 1911, the temple in their hotel suite at St Moritz was arranged in this manner: the large Mirror, which stretched almost to the ceiling, was in the corner of the East, that is to say it was in the position of the altar. In a line before it were five chairs, one for each of the White Brethren (who had turned red), seen by Mary in a dream, then in a trance; the chairs faced outwards to the room. An octagonal table, on which were Brother Perdurabo's magical weapons, books of invocation, incense and burner, stood near the centre of the room. Behind it was a large rectangular table. On the left-hand side of this table was a clock, symbol of Time, and on the right-hand side was a lamp, symbol of Space; and on the other side facing the mirror

were the Holy Books of Thelema; opposite, on the side at which the Magus (Crowley) stood, were writing materials.

In the left-hand wall was a door opening to the hotel corridor; this was blocked by a sofa. In the opposite wall was a window leading to a balcony. And in the wall behind the table at which Crowley stood (so that he had his back to it) was a door leading to Mary's bedroom.

The rest of the original furniture of the room had been stacked in a corner, diagonal to the corner where the magic mirror stood; it was cut off from the temple by a large screen which had been

placed in front of it.

At exactly 10.38 pm, Perdurabo entered the temple, suitably robed, and kindled the incense of Abra-Melin. This was made from olibanum, stacte, and lingnum aloes, and produced a pleasant smell. At 10.40 he performed the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram to clear the air of unwanted spirits. Mary, suitably attired in her 'abbai' and rich headdress, was already kneeling on the floor between the small octagonal table and the five chairs, facing the mirror.

At 10.45, Perdurabo began to intone these words which are taken from a Graeco-Egyptian papyrus.¹

Thee I invoke, the Bornless² one.

Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens:

Thee, that didst create the Night and the Day.

Thee, that didst create the Darkness and the Light.

Thou art Osorronophris: Whom no man hath seen at any time.

Thou art Jäbas:

Thou art Jäpós:

Thou hast distinguished between the Just and the Unjust.

Thou didst make the Female and the Male.

Thou didst produce the Seed and the Fruit.

Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate one another.

I am Mosheh Thy Prophet, unto Whom Thou didst commit Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies of the Ishrael:

1 Fragment of a Graeco-Egyptian Work upon Magic. From a Papyrus in the British Museum, Charles Wycliffe Goodwin, 1852.

2 Crowley objected to 'Headless' (ἀκέφαλου) of the original, and substituted 'Bornless', an impossible word, but meaning 'without limits'.

Thou didst produce the moist and the dry, and that which nourisheth all created Life.

Hear Thou Me, for I am the Angel of Paphro Osorronophris: 1 this is Thy True Name, handed down to the Prophets of

Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me; so that every Ishrael. Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

I invoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God: Who dwellest in the Void Place of the Spirit:

Arogogorobrao: Sothou:

Moderio: Phalarthao: Doo: Apé, the Bornless One.

The magician identifies himself with the god he is invoking, loses awareness of his human limitations, enflames himself with power. The whole theory of magic is based on three propositions, one of which is the belief in the limitless power of the magician. Hence Perdurabo's request (which, if he was advanced enough, would be granted), 'Hear me and make all Spirits subject unto

Crowley had learned this invocation in the Golden Dawn, Me', etc. whose leaders had realized its significance for their work. It is conspicuous for its use of 'barbarous names', the vibrating of which helps to produce the right current; it took eleven minutes to perform and was, Crowley said, 'done with great vigour and good success on simple exoteric lines'. The version given here - it is not quoted in full - is taken from The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King (where it appears as a kind of preamble), a work which Crowley borrowed from MacGregor Mathers. In Magick in Theory and Practice, 1929, some of the barbarous names have been replaced by others which have more consequence for the doctrine of thelema.

The time was exactly eleven o'clock when contact with the wizard was made.

PERD: Cujus nomen est Nemo,2 Frater A:.A: adest [He whose name is No One, a Brother of the A:A:, is present.]

1 A corruption of Asar Un-Nefer ('Myself made Perfect') a form of

2 No One (Nemo) was another of Crowley's magical titles.

Mary, who had been suitably prepared by drink and sex (the opus had already taken place), was in a fine receptive state but she was not a very good medium, as Crowley soon found out. Ab-ul-Diz spoke through her; so she had two voices, her own and the wizard's.

SEER: The white man is here, and he wants to know what you want.

PERD: Nothing. Did I call him or he me?

SEER: He called you . . . but there is 77!

This was not meaningless to Perdurabo; on the contrary, for 77 was the numerical value of the Hebrew motto of his other Scarlet Woman, Leila Waddell.

PERD: Why did you call me?

ABUL: To give you this book.

PERD: How will it be given?

ABUL: By the Secress.

(The Secress complains that she has no book.)

PERD: Do you claim to be a Brother of the A: A: ?1

SEER: He has A: A: in black letters on his breast, but they are always running into a 7.

PERD: What does A .: A .: mean?

At this point it is recorded that Ab-ul-Diz was showing numbers very quickly, but no definite proof of his genuineness or even, at this stage, of his reality, was established.

PERD: Give further signs of your identity, for example, are you Sapiens Dominabitur Astris?

This was the motto of Anna Sprengel, the foundress of the Golden Dawn, who had given the original charter to MacGregor Mathers and his two companions.

SEER: I see nothing but a skull.

A satisfactory answer, for Sapiens Dominabitur Astris was dead.

PERD: Is Deo Duce Comite Ferro one of you?

Deo Duce Comite Ferro was MacGregor Mathers, Crowley's enemy. Ab-ul-Diz does not reply to that tricky question.

PERD: Is Deo Duce Comite Ferro one of us?

ABUL: No. No longer.

1 i.e. Are you a Secret Chief?

True, they were once but now now.

PERD: Do you know this word: MAKHASHANAH?

A word given to Crowley during the 27th Aethyr of 'The Vision of the Voice'.

SEER: He writes it in gold, and after it he puts a black cross. (Seeress complains of someone beside her, breathing on her.)

PERD: Ask who breathes.

(Perdurabo observes that he can see small elementals dodging about.)

SEER: The black man; now he has a white turban.

PERD: Ask Ab-ul-Diz to send him away, unless he serves some purpose.

It is recorded that the Secress banished this disturbing intruder, who breathed down her neck, by means of the number 541 which Perdurabo had given her against fear. (She either pronounced it, wrote it down or thought it.) In Hebrew Cabbala, 541 stands for Israel, and in Greek Cabbala for Priapus.

Ab-ul-Diz then took charge of the proceedings.

ABUL: Let Perdurabo finish the word BAL.

PERD: Balata? Is that right?

ABUL: No.

These futile questions and answers continue and grow more meaningless. Crowley was well aware that a lot of the answers were nonsensical and he grew steadily less pleased. Who, he wondered, is this intelligence who calls himself Ab-ul-Diz? What is he trying to say? Crowley was prepared to go to infinite pains to find out.

ABUL: Ask me about nine.

PERD: Consider yourself asked.

ABUL: Nine is the number of a page in a book.

PERD: What book?

ABUL: A book of voyages.

PERD: We have none in stock. What book?

ABUL: A book of fools.

PERD: What book of fools?

Nine, and the phrase 'a book of fools' meant little or nothing to Crowley in 1911. He realised their significance only after he had become a Magus, with its numerical value of $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$, in the Great White Brotherhood of Light, the A: A:, during 1915, and especially after he had written, during the winter of 1917-18, The Book of Wisdom or Folly, which was of course the book of fools Ab-ul-Diz was referring to.

Crowley next asked the wizard to give the seeress a mystic name 'for Perdurabo to call her by'.

There was no reply from Ab-ul-Diz.

SEER: I won't tell you.

PERD: Please tell me.

SEER: He says the name should be that of the seventh virgin, and I won't be a virgin.

PERD: What is that name? (He repeats the question several times between long pauses.)

SEER: Two or three times he has shown me the letters V and I. PERD: Is it the seeress's fault or Perdurabo's fault that these communications are so futile? (Pause.) Or his own?

ABUL: (goaded to reply) If you can translate nine, you won't find it futile.

PERD: Well, how can I identify this book? Is there a copy now and here?

ABUL: No.

PERD: Where can I find it?

ABUL: In London. PERD: In my office?

ABUL: Are there black bookshelves in your office?

PERD: Dark brown. SEER: No. black!

PERD: I don't think so.

SEER: The book is marked with a crown, and under it, XXI.

PERD: Further details, please.

SEER: He shows another book with a blazing sun; the covers of it are of gold.

ABUL: The Book Four. Your instructions to the Brothers.

PERD: Then I'm not to publish it?

(Ab-ul-Diz gives the sign of silence, i.e. he assumes the thumbto-lip posture of Harpocrates.)

PERD: I understand by that that I'm not to publish it.

ABUL: Never!

SEER: Never, never, never, never. (Pause.) But you are to find

it. (Pause). He shows a gold ring.

PERD: Any letters?

SEER: I don't believe he's said at all what he came to say. PERD: Let him dictate slowly and clearly his message. I will

go and look for this Book Four, if I have sufficient direction.

Crowley glanced at the clock; it was 11.55 pm.

PERD: Does he wish to go on with this very unsatisfactory conversation?

ABUL: Go to London, find Book Four, and return it to the Brothers.

PERD: Where is Book Four?

ABUL: In London.

PERD: Where in London?

SEER: Do you know any place in London called 'Sign of the New Moon'?

PERD: Probably dozens.

Shortly afterwards, the seeress complained of fatigue, and Crowley saw the vision coming to an end. He therefore told Mary to ask Ab-ul-Diz for another appointment. She did so, and was given 4 December between 7 and 9 pm.

PERD: (to Ab-ul-Diz) Good-bye!

ABUL: Seven, seven, seven! Good-bye!

Thus ended the second communication from the wizard who called himself Ab-ul-Diz.

At exactly 9.00 pm on 4 December 1911, Crowley began the third vision. He was, of course, suitably attired in his black robe, and held in his right hand his ebony wand with its golden snakes and sapphire top; he was in his position behind the large rectangular table, and he faced the secress's back and the large lookingglass in which he could see the reflection of her face.

PERD: Adsum! [I am present!]

He observed, in parenthesis, that the seeress was drunk. She immediately saw the number 444, which made him think that he had better go at once to London to find this mysterious Book

The seeress observed that 'they' - presumably the five White Four. Brethren - were all sitting round a long table.

PERD: How shall I get this Book Four?

ABUL: It is waiting for you in London.

PERD: I don't want the rational answer; I want the absurd.

ABUL: One thousand four hundred and twenty-nine.

PERD: Enlarge on this.

ABUL: Ten . . . It's all about water.

Crowley explains that Book Four is all about water.

PERD: Tell me more.

ABUL: You disdained the ship I offered you. The ship was number one, with the Head of a Negro, golden beak, breast white.

SEER: In Ab-ul-Diz's hand is a wand with a golden spearhead. Now Perdurabo, dressed in white, steps into the vision. ABUL: Twenty-nine. Read twenty-nine! Thirty-nine! Don't waste time!

It is not clear who said this last line; it seems like Perdurabo's exasperated injunction to the seeress, especially as there is an observation (Crowley's) in parenthesis immediately afterwards to the effect that the seeress should be excited by . . . (here a sign for the erect phallus) in order to charge up her visionary qualities. according to tradition.

ABUL: Read sixty-nine.

SEER: Ab-ul Diz is now in black ... the room by the incense. His name is I AM.

PERD: What is my name?

ABUL: KAM.

PERD: What is the seeress's name? ABUL: Seven Hebrew characters.

The secress could recognise them as such but not read them.

PERD: Out of which name?

ABUL: Mystic name. PERD: Which?

SEER: A starry heaven. PERD: Your name?

ABIIL: VIRAKAM.

At last, after all these pointed questions and exasperating answers, Mary d'Esté's magical name in the Great Work is revealed - Virakam. Ab-ul-Diz was not entirely to blame, for the seeress was largely incoherent.

SEER: The Brothers are turning red on the ninth. White ball rolling on table from side to side, never fails. They're placing academic robes on Perdurabo, and a chain with a cross. They vote. Nine votes cast: two not cast.

This, Crowley commented, was a prevision of his initiation into the O.T.O. in Berlin during the following year (see page 182).

PERD: What do they vote about?

 ${\tt SEER}$: Can't find out . . . I wish you'd let me go . Let me go . . .

I can't decide it at all.

PERD: You have my sympathy.

Sister Virakam broke off and shortly afterwards she cried, 'Take me home!' Crowley described her as nearly in tears. Her mind was wandering. Now she said that she wanted to be near Crowley.

'You are near me, sweet,' replied Crowley.

After a while, she began to scry again.

SEER: They put a black robe on me too, one like you have. Oh, I'm afraid, I'm afraid. (She trembles all over and gasps) Only one star! Under the foot of Ab-ul-Diz is a skull and crossbones.

PERD: Good!

SEER: The cross-bones form the support of a chair. Nobody in chair now . . . Someone sitting cross-legged in it. Bell on table. My old man¹ only does what they tell him. He has a ring on his arm . . . There is a terrible enemy rising up for Perdurabo.

PERD: Who?

SEER: Tall, smooth-faced man, hair brushed back, age between thirty and forty.

PERD: Name?

SEER: N... GNGB. Bingham. Something ending in ham.

PERD: Birmingham?

SEER: Yes, it could be that. But you'll show him the white feather of the dove . . . a quill . . . dip in ink . . . Everybody's in black, heads covered, only eyes showing. They're all singing something in a book. (She sobs.) I won't do it any more.

Crowley decided to conclude this unsatisfactory vision, but before doing so, he asked the secress to inquire the date of the next communication.

SEER: Tenth of December, at 9.00 p.m.

PERD: Say Vale, Frater. [Good-bye, Brother.]

Seeress says so.

ABUL: He goes off with a casket.

SEER: I see lilies.

1 Ab-ul-Diz.

Crowley's summing-up of the results of this vision was that the seeress was now convinced of the reality of it all, much more so than on the previous occasion.

On 10 December at 8.40 pm, Crowley recorded in his Magical Record that he had arranged the hotel room ceremonially as before, but this time he would begin the working by reciting the Invocation of Horus. He did so at 8.50 pm.

One unpropitious incident happened during the invocation: the star sapphire flew out of the end of Perdurabo's wand and was

lost

At 9.18 pm, Perdurabo announced: *Nemo adest*. [*Nemo* – Crowley – is present.]

Perdurabo, who was gazing beyond the veils of matter, saw the seeress's body turn round and face him. (In reality she had her back to him, and was gazing at the looking-glass in the corner of the room.) Then he saw her go to a high door of a temple (another temple, not the one in the hotel), bearing always towards the left, the occult side, the side of the unconscious. Inside this astral temple, there was nothing but an empty bottomless vault; but it did not remain empty for long, for suddenly 'a white figure is sitting in the middle on a raised thing'.

The 'white figure' held up his left hand, thumb standing out very straight; on it he balanced a chain. He had a black rod in the other hand and with it he pointed to lines on the hand he was holding out. To make matters more complicated, his palm was covered by a blue glass through which lines could be seen, six lines in all, and at each point, there were different figures, such as a man on horseback, a black bird and so on.

PERD: (impatiently) Ask him, Where is the old man?

SEER: He's beside me.

PERD: What is his real message?

SEER: Something's wrong. I don't know what. I don't see him. I'm in a desert. Can't you clear it up?

In an attempt to clear it up. Crowley called out six times the name of his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass. A long pause followed.

At 9.36 pm, the seeress began to moan; she complained again about there being something wrong, and asked Perdurabo to clear it up.

1 This invocation is printed in The Equinox of the Gods, 1937

169

PERD: Ab-ul-Diz! Ab-ul-Diz! Ab-ul-Diz! Ab-ul-Diz! Ab-ul-Diz! Ab-ul-Diz! Ab-ul-Diz! Ab-ul-Diz!

SEER: A big black door. PERD: Go through it! SEER: It's closed.

PERD: Break it open!

SEER: A hooded man guards the door.
PERD: Push him away. Give some sign.
SEER: I should have something on my head.

PERD: Put on a white bandage,

Virakam was wearing her head-dress, but the image of her in the vision was hatless; she had therefore to supply an astral white bandage.

SEER: I can see nothing. I can do nothing. If only the old man were here!

PERD: Well, why isn't he? SEER: Is this the right hour?

PERD: Yes. Perhaps you've done something wrong!

SEER: Now I see the first room filled with figures in black robes and folded arms; their faces are hooded.

PERD: Is the old man there?

SEER: Sure, if I could only get to him.

PERD: Call his name.

SEER: They're not near me as usual.

PERD: Ask why.

Virakam broke down. She was not a good seeress; everything was so indistinct. She admitted that there was something wrong with her.

PERD: Ask forgiveness; ask what you're to do to get right.

SEER: I'm to obey.

PERD: In what have you disobeyed?

SEER: Faith.

PERD: Faith in what?

SEER: Faith in all. I haven't taken twenty steps.

Suddenly Virakam broke off, and burst out, 'I can't do it! I'm ready to die. I can't hear or understand. I want to go away!'

Crowley patiently waited for her to recover and continue. The work was more important than her feelings or health.

PERD: Is there anything you can do to put it right?

SEER: I can do nothing, dear.

PERD: Is that what they tell you?

SEER: To wait.

PERD: Anything else?
SEER: My part is to serve.

PERD: Serve whom?

SEER: The purpose.

PERD: Whose purpose? SEER: Perdurabo's.

PERD: What is my purpose?

SEER: To bring the light.

PERD: Amen. What can you do to aid that?

SEER: Obey.

PERD: But I do not wish to command.

SEER: The way shall be made clear. We shall be taken by the hand and guided and can make no mistake.

The time was now 9.58 pm.

PERD: Shall we go to France or Italy?

SEER: I see a candlestick with three candles.

This Crowley interpreted as a sign that they were to go to Italy.

SEER: Old man will come alone tomorrow at seven.

PERD: Can't he make it a more convenient hour, such as ten?

SEER: Yes, ten.

PERD: Does he want me to invoke as tonight?¹

SEER: Be better prepared. Use the holy rite.

PERD: Which holy rite?

SEER: The one you used for the initiation.

PERD: You mean the opening?

SEER: Yes.

PERD: Very good. Vale Frater! What shall I do to seer?2

SEER: Six thousand two hundred and eighty.

Crowley interpreted this number as meaning that he should give seeress wine.

PERD: After the due performance of the Rites of Venus?

SEER: Ay, verily! PERD: Vale, Frater!

1 To use the same sex rite and the same invocatory prayers.

2 This question was addressed to Ab-ul-Diz: what should Crowley do to induce in Sister Virakam the right inspiration so that she could make the link with the wizard?

Here the ceremony concluded, and as Perdurabo went out of the temple, Virakam saw that he had four eyes instead of the usual two.

At 9.30 pm the following day, 11 December, the temple was opened with Ritual 671, *The Building of the Pyramid* (see page 188). Virakam, as instructed by Ab-ul-Diz during the previous vision, had been well prepared. Crowley wrote, "Seer being excited by a half bottle of Pommery 1904, and by Eros, opened the Temple with 671. Towards the end Seer cried "The Beast!" amid her groans. It is now 9.49."

SEER: The Beast has come in here. He opens his mouth. Many characters come therefrom.

PERD: Describe the Beast.

SEER: Great God! He's tremendous. Like an ox, and between his horns lies another curled horn. (She groans.) It comes down over his face. The half of his right foot is white . . . It's an arrow, and below the arrow is the letter V. I only want the truth, the truth, the truth!

PERD: What is his name?

SEER: I think it's Uranus . . . Eros maybe.

Crowley interjected at this point that the seeress had become unintelligible.

A number of other rather aimless questions and unsatisfactory answers follow; then:

PERD: Tell me about this Book Four.

SEER: It's the most important. You'll find it unexpectedly.

PERD: Who?

SEER: (cutting in) Wait! Be patient! Work! Deny nothing! The simplest things mean most. You're on the way. *Book Four* means freedom to all. It's the light.

For a change, Crowley puts his questions in cypher, the same simple cypher by which Levin proposed to Kitty in *Anna Karenina*.

PERD: I.l.n.i.t.b.p.e.? (Is last night's instruction to be punctually executed?)

SEER: Yes, but more. Ask again. There are great events happening and you are too doubtful. Have confidence.

PERD: M.w.a.t.i.o.l.n? (May we alter the instruction of last night?)

SEER: No. You are the test. Obey. She serves.

PERD: When shall we speak again with him?

SEER: Tonight. If you will you can know all. Only ask clearly. All are here; the eleven, the five and the six.

With this reply, the nonsensical level of the communications rose again.

PERD: (determinedly) Is P the L of the A? (Is Perdurabo the Logos of the Aeon?)

SEER: He's the D of the A!

The Demon of the Aeon! Crowley started at this reply.

PERD: When are we going to see them1 again?

SEER: Oh, God! I hope never! I'm dead. I'm dead. I'm dead. I won't tell you. I won't. I'm tired. I won't be here on the 13th. I'm going away. I won't obey. I won't . . . ('Ad lib.' wrote Crowley, who was keeping the record, and added, 'screams and groans and sighs.')

PERD: At what hour on the 13th?

SEER: Nine.

PERD: Then Vale, Frater. (He salutes Ab-ul-Diz good-bye.)

Crowley added as a footnote to this last communication this piece of information:

Previous to the Orgie² and the Incantations,³ Seer was lying drunk on the sofa; the Eleven⁴ came to her and gave her mystic gifts, one knowledge, another power, another wisdom, etc. and said it was all for the Cause. They sealed the gifts *basiculo ad cunnum*.⁵ The last one said, 'I'll bring you the seed from which fruit shall come.'

On the 13th, the vision opened without a ceremony at exactly 9.06 pm. Crowley merely said, 'Ready?' We do not know what the seeress replied, because it is not recorded, but a minute later, Crowley announced, 'Nemo adest' (Nemo is present). At 9.10, the seeress was ready.

PERD: Is Ab-ul-Diz there?

SEER: Has been here for some time. PERD: Will he answer questions?

SEER: Yes. (Pause.) Tonight there'll be trouble. I feel it.

1 The mystic Brethren.

2 The act of sex-magic.

4 Eleven magi.

3 Ritual 671, see page 188.

5 'A little kiss on the cunt.'

PERD: Why?

SEER: Lack of faith. If you'd only believe and go straight . . .

PERD: Who is doubting?

SEER: You.
PERD: Not at all.

SEER: Yes.

PERD: You, O, Seer, have doubted.

SEER: Prove me. PERD: W.K.g.u.h.p?

Mary d'Esté possessed a valuable pearl necklace. Crowley, thinking of a 'supreme test' of faith, therefore guardedly asked her, 'Will Kundry give up her pearls?' Kundry was the mythical woman who, for laughing at Jesus while he was carrying his cross, was doomed to helpless remorse for ages. See Wagner's *Parsifal*.

SEER: No, not yet.

PERD: What will happen in that case?
SEER: What happened to you before?
PERD: Ah, God! (Pause.) Is it too late?
SEER: No. Not too late, but too little faith.

PERD: Take these in your hand. (He gives her her pearls.)

SEER: Why? (Startled) They've disappeared; there's nothing left; they no longer exist. Never mind. I'm at home with them. How well they know it! Begin his name with last letter; write it otherwise and add twenty-two. Begin with ZIDLUBA, O, mocker!

PERD: What have you done?

SEER: I have thrown away the pearls. I was quite right. He² tells me so. If you can't give me spiritual gifts and things of value, I don't need any. I don't need pearls; I need light.

PERD: What shall be done with the pearls?

SEER: Nothing! They're of no value. Understand, for God's sake, understand!

PERD: S.t.p.b.s.t.V? (Shall the pearls be sent to V.V.V.V.V.?³)

SEER: Wait and know. You were answered this question before.

To sum up: the Wizard Ab-ul-Diz, one of the Secret Chiefs, informed Crowley, through Sister Virakam, that he was to write a work on magic, to be entitled *Book Four*. And that he and Virakam were to do so in Naples. (And Crowley, of course, held on to the pearls.)

1 The Brethren.

2 Ab-ul-Diz.

3 Crowley.

After several adventures and a series of quarrels, they found the Villa Caldarazzo at Posilippo, near Naples, where Perdurabo, in a confident and creative mood, speedily dictated the work in question.

Book Four is a clear and witty account of those two cloudy subjects, magic and yoga. The Saxon k, added to the c in magick, was here used by him for the first time, to link his brand with the Science of the Magi, as opposed to mere conjuring tricks. It has also a secret meaning, for the k stands for k for the female genitals which were now playing a large part in Crowley's magical operations.

When Crowley grew tired of pulling other people's legs, he started to pull his own. This is part of the preamble to *Book Four*; Perdurabo and not Sister Virakam wrote it, needless to say.

Nearly midnight. At this moment we stopped dictating, and began to converse. Then Fra. P. said 'Oh, if I could only dictate a book like the Tao Teh King!' Then he closed his eyes as if meditating. Just before I had noticed a change in his face, most extraordinary, as if he were no longer the same person; in fact, in the ten minutes we were talking, he seemed to be any number of different people. I especially noticed the pupils of his eyes were so enlarged that the entire eye seemed black. (I tremble so and I have such a quaking feeling inside, simply in thinking of last night, that I can't form letters.) Then quite slowly the entire room filled with a thick yellow light (deep golden, but not brilliant. I mean not dazzling, but soft). Fra. P. looked like a person I have never seen but seemed to know quite well - his face, clothes and all were of the same yellow. I was so disturbed that I looked up to the ceiling to see what caused the light, but could only see the candles. Then the chair on which he sat seemed to rise; it was like a throne, and he seemed to be either dead or sleeping, but it was certainly no longer Fra. P. This frightened me, and I tried to understand by looking round the room; when I looked back the chair was raised, and he was still the same. I realized I was alone; and thinking he was dead or gone - or some other terrible thing - I lost consciousness.'

Mary d'Esté Sturges had not realized that Aleister Crowley had returned, so to speak, to one of his previous incarnations; the spirit of Lao-tzu had regained an earthly shell.

Crowley, like his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, lacked limitations. He felt himself to be someone else every minute. It was as if

Aiwass had said to him, 'On no account live within your own skin.' Book Four was published during 1911 in London, price (in conformity with the title) four groats, or, for those who lacked groats, one shilling. Part Two of this curious work came out the following year at the price of 'four tanners', or two shillings. One of the illustrations shows Crowley with a beard, sitting naked in the sea, the pellucid water up to his waist. His slender figure and mop of hair point to an earlier period; he had since grown fat and bald. The caption to this unusual photograph, curious even for a book on magic, but not, I suppose, for a book on magick, are these words $Xaipe \Sigma \omega \tau \eta p$ Kosuov (Hail, Saviour of the World).

Meanwhile Mary had fled from Crowley and his magick. 'The secret contest between the Will of Virakam and my own broke into open hostility,' he wrote. 'A serious quarrel led to her dashing off to Paris.'

During the same year, or perhaps a little earlier, he published *Alexandra*. It bears no date, author, or publisher; it was, in fact printed in Paris, and on its title page is written, 'annotated fragments of an Ode to England's Queen. Privately issued to Persons of Quality. Five Dollars.' The book is revoltingly obscene and is now an exceedingly rare work. Crowley tried to import the stock, which could not have been large, into Britain, but it was seized by the customs and destroyed.

After Mary d'Esté Sturges had rejoined Isadora Duncan, Crowley returned to Leila Waddell. During the summer of 1913, they led a troupe of chorus girls, whom Crowley called 'The Ragged Rag-Time Girls', to Moscow. He claimed the credit for organising this party and devising the show. On 3 March, they had appeared, he said, at the Old Tivoli and 'taken London by storm'. Crowley did not sustain the role of impresario for long. He wrote:

It was a sickening business, but it brought me into contact with a class of society to which I had been altogether a stranger; from the coarse agent to the brutal producer and vulgar performer – all alike in their absolute absorption in money-making, all equally ignorant of and contemptuous of art in itself, all equally mean, cowardly, callous, and unscrupulous in everything that touched 'the Show'.

At the Russian frontier, we plunged from civilisation and order headlong into confusion and anarchy. No one on the train could speak a word even of German. We were thrown out

at Warsaw into a desolation which could hardly have been exceeded had we dropped on the moon. At last we found a loafer who spoke a little German but no man knew or cared about the trains to Moscow. We ultimately drove to another station. A train was due to leave, but they would not find us accommodation. We drove once more across the incoherent city, and this time found room in a train which hoped to go to Moscow at the average rate of some ten miles an hour. The compartment contained shelves covered with loose dirty straw on which the passengers indiscriminately drank, gambled, quarrelled and made love. There was no discipline, no order, no convenience.

At first I blamed myself, my ignorance of the language and so on, for the muddle in Warsaw; but the British Consul told me that he had himself been held up there by railway mismanagement on one occasion for forty-eight hours. When we reached Moscow there was no one at the station who could take charge of our party. We found a hotel for ourselves and rooms for the girls, more by good luck than design. About one in the morning they sent for Leila to rescue them. She found them standing on rickety tables, screaming with fear. They had been attacked by bed-bugs. Luckily I had warned Leila that in Russia the bug is as inseparable from the bed as the snail from his shell.

In a day or two things calmed down. Then there came suddenly upon me a period of stupendous spiritual impulse - even more concentrated than that of 1911. In a café I met a young Hungarian girl named Anny Ringler; tall, tense, lean as a starving leopardess, with wild insatiable eyes and a long straight thin mouth, a scarlet scar which seemed to ache with the anguish of hunger for some satisfaction beyond earth's power to supply. We came together with irresistible magnetism. We could not converse in human language. I had forgotten nearly all my Russian; and her German was confined to a few broken cries. But we had no need of speech. The love between us was ineffably intense. It still inflames my inmost spirit. She had passed beyond the region where pleasure had meaning for her. She could only feel through pain, and my own means of making her happy was to inflict physical cruelties as she directed. This kind of relation was altogether new to me; and it was perhaps because of this, intensified as it was by the environment of the self-torturing soul of Russia, that I became inspired to create for the next six weeks.

I saw Anny almost every day for an hour or so. The rest of my time I spent (for the most part) in the gardens of the Hermitage¹ or the Aquarium, writing for dear life. In Moscow, in the summer months, day fades into night, night brightens into day with imperceptible subtlety. There is a spiritual clarity in the air itself which is indescribable. From time to time the bells reinforce the silence with an unearthly music which never jars or tires. The hours stream by so intoxicatingly that the idea of time itself disappears from consciousness.

In this atmosphere Crowley wrote his *Gnostic Mass* and the poem entitled *The City of God*. The following January the latter was published in the opening pages of *The English Review*:

Gold upon gold, dome above dome, faint arrow Kindling sharp crescent, as the sunrays swept, Save for one midnight moment when one narrow Fierce ray, exhaling from no eye that slept Of God, our God, the sun - gold upon gold, Frond upon frond, fold upon fold Of walls like leaves and cupolas like flowers, And spires and domes that were as fabled fruit Of the low lands beyond the pillared seas . . . Then was I caught up into rapture - yea! From heaven to heaven was I swept away. And all that shadow city past, And I was in the City of God at last. The city was alive, athrob, astir, Shaped as the sacred, secret place of Her That hath no name on earth, whose whisper we Catch only in the silence of the sea. And through it poured a river of sunset blood, Pulsing its choral and colossal flood Throughout the city, and lifting it aloft . . .

In Moscow at this time he also wrote the *Hymn to Pan*, the best known and most characteristic of his poems.

1 The Hermitage is not in Moscow but St Petersburg (Leningrad). 2 Crowley's 'Ragged Rag-Time Girls' were performing in the Aquarium.

13 THE HIGH MAGICK ART

CROWLEY was a friendless man, not because he had no one to be friendly with, but because, like all founders of religions, he wanted followers, not friends. Aleister Crowley the man meant little to him; his thoughts were entirely with Crowley the logos of the Aeon, or Crowley the Wanderer of the Waste.

During his last year at Cambridge, when he was twenty-three, he met a man ten years older than himself. This was Herbert Pollitt who, according to Crowley, had come up to Cambridge merely to dance for the Footlights Club. He called himself Diane de Rougy after the celebrated courtesan and actress, Liane de Pougy. Crowley also described him as a female impersonator, but by this he meant an actor, not a transvestite. The two men became friends; the friendship deepened; Crowley called it the first intimate friendship of his life.

His account of Pollitt has an odd undertone. Here was a great friendship, but the brief description of it reveals that it rather lacked solid foundation. The description of Pollitt's face is not encouraging – it was tragic-looking because of the terrible hunger of the eyes and the bitter sadness of the mouth. Only his pale golden hair which, like Oscar Wilde, he wore long, was beautiful in Crowley's eyes. Crowley's brief remarks about this intimate friend of his, a friend who seemed to mean a great deal to him, are unexpectedly detached and unaffectionate. And Pollitt's attitude to Crowley was no warmer; he showed not the slightest interest in any of his occupations, nor had he any sympathy with his poetical and magical ambitions. What, then, had they in common? What was the basis of their relationship, described by Crowley as the 'purest and noblest'.

The answer is not far to seek. Crowley does his best to cover up the secret by veiled language and by interposing in his account of Pollitt the information that his, Crowley's, sexual life at this time was intense, and that his relations with women were entirely satisfactory. Then he rudely kicks aside the veil with this remark: 'The relation between us was that ideal intimacy which the Greeks considered the greatest glory of manhood and the most precious prize of life.'

THE HIGH MAGICK ART

179

Pollitt was perhaps the first man who enabled Crowley to indulge his feminine feelings in a straightforward sexual sense. Through him, he undoubtedly gathered some of the matter for *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*, also entitled *Bagh-I-Muattar*, published privately in 1910. One of its homosexual poems called *The Riddle* is, in a way, dedicated to this intimate friend, for when the first letter of each couplet is read downwards, there is revealed the name of HERBERT CHARLES JEROME POLLITT.

Among Crowley's papers is a typescript entitled

The

Book of the HIGH MAGICK ART

that was worked by Frater O.S.V. $6^{\circ} = 5^{\circ}$ And Frater L.T. $2^{\circ} = 9^{\circ}$ The Paris Working

Jan.-Feb. 1914 e.v.

Frater O.S.V. was Crowley, the $6^{\circ} = 5^{\circ}$ signifies the grade of Adeptus Major in the Order of the A : A : C rowley had surpassed this grade by 1914; he was in fact a Master of the Temple, but he used for this working the Adeptus Major Grade because it is the grade for magical operations. O.S.V. stands for *Ol Sonuf Vaoresagi*, which means 'I reign over ye', from the First Key or Call in the Enochian or angelic language of Dr John Dee and Sir Edward Kelley.

Ol sonuf vaoresagi goho iad balata lansh calz: 'I reign over ye,' saith the God of Justice, 'in power exalted above the Firmaments of Wrath.'

Frater L.T. $2^{\circ} = 9^{\circ}$ was Frater Lampada Tradam or Brother 'I will hand on the torch'. His motto when Probationer $0^{\circ} = 0^{\circ}$ was Omnia Vincam; in other words, Victor Neuburg, who was still Crowley's companion and his chief magical assistant in XI° workings. And *The Paris Working* was an XI° or homosexual working.

The time was January and February 1914, era vulgari, Crowley's phrase for Anno Domini.

The Paris Working is mentioned in The Confessions in these words:

At the end of 1913, I found myself in Paris with a Zelator of the

Order, Frater L.T. I had been working on the theory of the magical method of the O.T.O. and we decided to test my conclusions by a series of invocations.

We began work on the first day of the year, and continued without interruption for six weeks. We invoked the gods Mercury and Jupiter; and obtained many astonishing results of many kinds, ranging from spiritual illumination to physical phenomena.

As Crowley does not explain what 'the theory of the magical method of the O.T.O.' is, the reader is left to believe that these invocations were of a purely ceremonial nature, and that the 'many astonishing results' is probably an exaggeration.

The Paris Working is the record of a series of invocations of Mercury – in the actual document he is more often called by his Greek name of Hermes – and of Jupiter for the usual purpose as taught in the Golden Dawn, namely that of obtaining wisdom from the one god and priestly power from the other; but because of the sexual rite between the two magicians, the results were expected to be much more powerful, and the by-products of considerable practicable use. In fact, Crowley had in mind that Jupiter would bring them gold, and Hermes would give them inspirations for the writing of a successful story or two, or at least an excellent poem.

The letters O.T.O. stand for Ordo Templi Orientis or Order of the Templars of the East or Order of the Oriental Templars, an occult society which was founded in Germany at the beginning of this century. Its leaders were well-known Grand Masters of masonry, such as Franz Hartmann, Heinrich Klein, and Karl Kellner. They had decided to found the O.T.O. after the Viennese Karl Kellner had returned from an extensive tour in the East (where he had been initiated by the Arab fakir, Soliman ben Aifha, and the Indian yogis, Bhima Sen Pratap and Sri Mahatma Agamya Guru Paramahamsa) and had expounded the mysteries of yoga and the philosophy of the left-hand path which he called 'sexual magic'. Thus, in 1902, the Ordo Templi Orientis was constituted for an inner circle of adepts who, in the light of this new and exciting knowledge, found the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of masonry rather tame, and the ninety-seven degrees of the tiresome Rite of Memphis quite unnecessary.

The supposed sexual practices of the Templars, which brought about their suppression at the beginning of the 14th century, made

these German and Austrian occultists decide to call themselves Oriental Templars. It is true that their new knowledge derived from the East, but they liked to make the romantic suggestion, and even claim, that their Order had inherited the secret rites of the Knights Templar as well. They were not, it is necessary to say, the first occult society of modern times to do so.

It is thought that the charges against the Poor Knights of the Temple were no more true than those against witches during later times. Their confessions, extracted under torture, are naturally suspect. Montague Summers considered that the truth of the charges can hardly be denied; and he explained the Templars' satanism and homosexuality as due to their ties with the East. (But Montague Summers, whom the present writer knew, was a homosexual himself, hated women, believed all the charges against witches and urged that the statutes against them, abolished in the 18th century, should be put back on the statute book. He was really an 18th-century character.) The Templars were, he said, Gnostic heretics; this may be true. Briefly, they were alleged to have denied Christ (which the Gnostics of course did not) and to have spat on the Cross; to have given one another the osculum obscaenum, the obscene kiss, i.e. to have kissed one another's bottom, practised unnatural vice, and to have worshipped an androgynous idol called Baphomet, a name which has been the subject of much speculation and research.

Whether or not the Templars did these things – because they were atheists or Gnostic heretics or sat at the feet of the Old Man of the Mountains – I do not know. The only point that matters here is that Crowley and the rest of these Continental 'Oriental Templars' thought they did. If the Templars indulged in a practice so horrible that the law at that time would not allow its name to appear in print (the law on this and other matters has been greatly relaxed in recent years) and made it part of a 'religious' ritual, then they had indeed arrived at wisdom.

The appearance of Baphomet, the Templars' idol, has been described in different and contradictory ways. He was a face; he was two faces; he was three faces; he had a beard; he was just a bare skull without any face or beard at all. Another opinion was that Baphomet had a beard but that it was attached to the chin of a goat.

The Templars called him their Saviour; he made the flowers to grow, the earth to germinate. Because of him, their coffers were filled . . .

An Austrian Orientalist of the last century, Baron Joseph von Hammer-Pürgstall, after he had examined the inscription upon a coffer found in Burgundy, said that the name Baphomet is derived from two Greek words $\beta a \phi \dot{\eta} \mu \dot{\eta} \tau \epsilon o \varsigma$, the baptism of Metis (Wisdom), or as Montague Summers has it in English, the Absorption into Wisdom. It is equivalent to the word wisdom itself.

The translation of the inscription on the Burgundy coffer examined by Hammer-Pürgstall yielded: 'Let Metis [i.e. Baphomet] be exalted, who causes things to bud and blossom! He is our root; it is one and seven; abjure the faith and abandon thyself to all pleasures.'

In other words, glorify Baphomet; he is the true god. Renounce Christianity and 'do what thou wilt'.

The *Oriflamme*, the organ of these German 'Templars', announced the new direction of their secret society in these words:

O, disciple!
Who seeks it, will suffer;
Who finds it, conceal it;
Who uses it, let no one know.
He who is a true philosopher
Shall remain unknown.

Having warned everyone to keep it dark, the *Oriflamme* then proceeded to shed a little light on it or, at least, to whet one's appetite for further information. It announced that 'Our Order possesses the KEY which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely, the teaching of *sexual magic*, and this teaching explains, without exception, all the secrets of Nature, all the *symbolism* of FREEMASONRY and all systems of religion'. But what sexual magic was exactly, and what one had to do to practise it correctly, was given out only by word of mouth to members of the Secret Sanctuary; in other words to those who were advanced enough and who could be trusted.

Now, Aleister Crowley had also travelled to the East and studied yoga and learned as much as he could about Eastern sexual practices – he was, in fact, in India at the same time as Kellner, although they never met or knew of each other's existence – and he was publishing these things in his voluminous works in a manner which was sometimes open and sometimes veiled. Indeed, there is little in his writings on the mysteries which has not a sexual allusion or undertone.

One night in 1912, there came a tap on the door of Crowley's

chambers in Victoria Street and a mysterious stranger with a handlebar moustache and pince-nez asked to see him. It was Theodor Reuss, head of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* since Karl Kellner had died 'in mysterious circumstances' in 1905. (Being an enterprising man and a patriot, Reuss was also a member of the German Secret Service.¹)

He did not waste words; straight away he accused Crowley of publishing the innermost secret of the O.T.O., the IX° secret.

Crowley denied it. He did not know, he said, what their secret was.

Reuss replied by going to the bookshelf and taking out that little book, each page of which is enclosed in a heavy black border, called *Liber CCCXXXIII: the Book of Lies.* He opened it at the page which begins, 'Let the Adept be armed with his Magick Rood and provided with his Mystic Rose',² and showed it to Crowley.

Crowley had, of course, been poking about in the same dark corners as these German Oriental Templars. Naturally he had discovered their secret, but it might equally be said that they had discovered his. Reuss begged him never to reveal it improperly; it was the most sacred secret in the world. Crowley, moved by Reuss's eloquence and the seriousness of what they were discussing, solemnly swore that he would not divulge it. It was one of the few secrets he kept.

The two adepts talked long into the night. 'Since,' argued Brother Merlin (Herr Reuss's magical name), 'you know our hidden sex teachings, you had better come into our Order, and be its head for Great Britain.' Crowley, who never declined a dinner, an adventure, or a title, readily agreed, and so, after a journey to Berlin, he was transformed with due ceremony into 'the Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains that are in the Sanctuary of the Gnosis'.³ And with that keenness and audacity

1 In 1884, Reuss was expelled from the Socialist League for being a spy for the German Secret Service. He was half English and half German, called himself Charles Theodor as well as Theodor Reuss, and was earning his living in England as a music hall singer. The songs he sang at a concert in aid of funds for the Socialist League – he was on the Executive of the League – disgusted his colleague Eleanor ('Tussy') Marx. She called him a vulgarian and a filthy fellow.

2 The Magick Rood is the Phallus and the Mystic Rose is the Vagina.
3 The name of the British section of the O.T.O. is the M. M. M.

(Mysteria Mystica Maxima).

of mind which sees and seizes the main point, he gave himself the magical name, corresponding with his elevated position in this mystic order, of *Baphomet*.¹



In the same year, at the Special Convocation (held in Crowley's Fulham Road studio) of the Supreme Sanctuary of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Masonry, Crowley was elected Patriarch Grand Administrator General 33°, 90°, 96° of the Order.

Crowley and Reuss pooled their other secrets. Brother Merlin explained to Brother Baphomet the theory behind that school of alchemy which uses sexual fluids and the 'elixir of life'. And Brother Baphomet made more explicit the homosexual wisdom of *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*. He also offered to rewrite the rituals of the Order of Oriental Templars – they were then only in skeletal form – as Yeats had rewritten those of the Golden Dawn for MacGregor Mathers. He was invited to do so, and speedily transformed them into honeyed English, inextricably wound them round *The Book of the Law* and made

1 As if the matter were not mysterious enough, Crowley had to throw this into it: his book, *Liber CCCXXXIII*, was not published till 1913, a year *after* Reuss's visit. This makes nonsense of it all, unless one can believe, as Crowley believed, that he and Reuss were in a time-sequence or space-time continuum, a year in advance of the normal.

them unintelligible in any final sense without a knowledge of certain facts in the life of Aleister Crowley. In addition, he wrote for the Order his Gnostic Mass in which the IXth° secret is presented in fairly obvious symbols, and wound that, too, round the Beast 666.

And I believe in the Serpent and the Lion, Mystery of Mystery, in his name Baphomet. And I believe in one Gnostic Catholic Church of Light, Love and Liberty, the Word of whose Law is $\Theta E \Lambda HMA$.

The Gnostic Mass was translated into German and published in the *Oriflamme*. It was received by the rest of the Templars with disquiet. They had not accepted *The Book of the Law*, did not intend to do so, and they objected to Crowley's swallowing their Order. Theodor Reuss came in for a fair amount of criticism; but he had also found Thelema too much of a good thing; the glorification of Aleister Crowley had not been part of the bargain.

Two facts prevented Crowley's expulsion from the O.T.O. In spite of all its bombast and apparent activity, the Order was now more or less ineffectual, existing largely on paper. In 1905, it could count among its members that man of genius, Rudolph Steiner, the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society, who later founded his own society of Anthroposophy which still flourishes. Reuss invited Steiner into the Inner Order of the O.T.O. But by 1914, the best German freemasons were cold-shouldering the O.T.O. and looking upon Reuss as a cad. And before the questionable character of Aleister Crowley could come up for debate, and he could affront the Order by further acts of personal expression, the World War had broken out.

The O.T.O. was not alone in the field; sex as a subject of serious interest was being investigated by Havelock Ellis and in a wider perspective by Freud; and the current of Eastern philosophical and religious ideas had been blowing for some time. On a popular level, Eastern thought was being introduced by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who founded in 1875 the Theosophical Society. The time was ripe for the reception in the West of these ideas.

What is this 'sexual magic' which the high-grade mason, Karl Kellner, had learned from Arab and Indian yogis and which Crowley had discovered for himself? It is the ritual of the *Vamacharis* or followers of the left-hand path, so-called because their

worship is performed with women who are lunar or of the left. The figure of a man and woman coupled in sexual union is not thought impure by most Indians; on the contrary, it is considered a veritable sacrificial rite. The worshipper has an attitude towards the woman which is different from that of an ordinary person performing the sexual act; besides, the woman is usually the man's wife. But whether she is or not, she is not thought of as a woman as such, but as a symbol of divinity, of the Divine Mother. As one scholar has said of the ritual, 'Western people often see obscenity where there is only symbolism'. Those in the East who practise the form of worship which involves sex are not approaching the subject from the point of view of ordinary consciousness. They are, in fact, yogis, men who can call forth in themselves kundalini, which is likened to a serpent, that supreme power in the human body, through the arousing of which, yoga, or unity with God, is achieved. The woman, too, is on the same plane; together they partake of the 'Feast of the Five Elements' (Panchatattya) in a frame of mind which is not earthly but mystical. The five elements are the four of Western occult tradition, Fire, Air, Water and Earth, represented respectively by Wine, Flesh, Fish, and Cereals, and a fifth element of Spirit or Ether, the purpose of which is to synthesise or purify the four elements already mentioned. This fifth element is symbolised by the union of Shiva and Shaki, and on the earthly plane by sexual union (Maithuna). It would fail in its purpose if it were performed in the wrong frame of mind or by those in whom the kundalini force had not been aroused. The operator would experience only a commonplace orgasm instead of that most sublime of all experiences. Samadhi. ecstasy, union with God.

Eating and drinking sustain the body and sexual intercourse propagates it. They are all natural functions and there is no reason why intercourse, if regulated as prescribed in the Tantras, should not serve an end superior to that of sensuality.

Not having access to the records of the German branch of the O.T.O., I do not know the nature of the sexual magic which Karl Kellner, Reuss and company practised; but I am inclined to think that it was not in the manner of the *Panchatattva*. In the first place, these German and Austrian occultists were not Orientals, nor were they yogis. At best they could have performed only a debased form of sexual magic; their photographs with the exception perhaps of that of Franz Hartmann, who visited Madame

1 Sir John Woodroffe, Shakti and Shakta.

Blavatsky in India and bored her to distraction, hardly reveal the faces of holy men, only those of *Wurst-und-Sauerkraut Adepten*, clad like *Bürgermeisters*, in their flamboyant robes and insignia of office.

Crowley, on the other hand, was not so smug; neither was he, like Karl Kellner, an ironmaster with a prosperous business to worry about. It would not have been surprising had Crowley stayed out in the East and become a Tantric yogi and practised, after years of preparation, these mysterious rites. The Paris Working, which is a document not intended for publication, can tell us, after it has been deciphered, to what extent Crowley practised sexual magic and with what success.

'This is the preliminary account of this Operation of Magick Art,' announces the opening sentence of *The Paris Working*. There was no later and full account of this operation, but another document called *The Esoteric Record of the Workings*, which Crowley wrote up from notes, extends the subject.

The Paris Working was Crowley's first systematic attempt at sexual magic which, in his Confessions, he conceals behind a bland and innocuous statement. As a leader of the O.T.O. he felt obliged to practise sex magically. And he began with a man instead of a woman (which is contrary to the spirit of Maithuna) because he happened to be living in Paris with a brother of the Order, and he had promised to initiate him into these higher mysteries. The deities to be invoked were the same as those he had previously worshipped in the Golden Dawn with rituals of a purely ceremonial type; he now wished to find out if this new sexual method was more efficacious.

When writing about sex Crowley usually adopted an ironically pompous tone, as if at heart he did not believe in what he was saying. It was a huge joke, really, to announce in a parsonic voice that he had been attending to his devotions when all he meant was that he'd been committing fornication with a prostitute, and a rather ugly one at that.

In a preamble, Crowley announces the programme.

⊙ in ≃. An. IX [the 9th year of the new aeon of Horus which began in 1904, i.e. 1913]. Frater O.S.V. accomplished the task laid on him by the Great White Brotherhood by issuing No. 10 of *The Equinox*. Thereby, he being brought to the end of his resources, he bethought himself to pray unto the Great Gods of Heaven that they should bestow favour upon him – for even as

did Job, he cursed not God at all – that he might make a new sacrifice unto the Magnum Opus.

In this context, the Magnum Opus means a variety of things, from freeing mankind from its burdens to obtaining contact with one's Holy Guardian Angel.

Now there appeared Fra. Lampada Tradam, having passed through the ordeal of a Neophyte to undertake the task of a Zelator, as by his Oath bound.

Also for months 18 had Fra. O.S.V. been initiated by Fra. M[erlin] into the Greater Mysteries, and been by him inducted into the Throne of the Order of the Temple.

According to this statement, Theodor Reuss (Frater Merlin) had initiated Crowley into the Greater Mysteries (of sexual magic), but the phrase must not be taken literally. The rest of the sentence is a reference to the enthronement in Berlin of Baphomet.

'Moreover it is fitting to reconstitute this Order [the O.T.O.] in its splendour, for at the entry of \odot into \circ An.X [1914] is the 600th anniversary of the Martyrdom of J.B.M. [Jacobus Burgundicus Molensis or Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar who in 1314 died at the stake].

Another reason given in *The Paris Working* for commencing these invocations was that 'a casual invocation of Pan by these brethren had produced a great marvel'.

Crowley does not say what the great marvel was, but an invocation of Pan in this context means an act of sex; it is described as casual, for it had happened without careful preparations.

'All things therefore tending thereto, let us take up the Work with piety and zeal, and in holy charity and great chastity of body and soul. Amen.

'Written at 4.30 of the afternoon on the last day of the vulgar year 1913.'

These pious phrases are directed against the religious zeal of his parents and the whole of Christendom.

Thus therefore to the Glory of the Ineffable One of the Dove and of the Serpent, did these two Brethren begin their working. First. From 4.55 to 5.35 did I confess myself, even I, Frater O.S.V. $6^{\circ} = 5^{\circ}$, receiving the Sacrament from a certain priest, A.B., and thereby being much comforted did I set myself to the painting of the prime pantacle of this book.

The dove is a symbol of conjugal love as well as of the spirit; the serpent is a symbol of instinctual life, of evil, and of wisdom

too. According to Freud and countless others before him, the serpent has a phallic significance; in *The Paris Working* these two signs stand for the yoni and the lingam or the female and male sexual organs.

The 'priest' A.B. (whoever he was) was a priest only in a Crowleian sense, that is to say, he participated in these occult mysteries. The phrase about receiving the 'sacrament' from him means only that Crowley received his semen.

While painting the pantacle or disc, doubtless with Mercurial attributes (it has not been preserved), inspiration came to him 'from the Most High', from whom all exalted inspiration comes. This particular inspiration said that although Pan was the Master of the work that Crowley proposed to perform with Brother L.T., without divine wisdom they would get nowhere. As Hermes was the god of wisdom, as well as the patron of magic and an archwizard himself, he and not the fantastic Arcadian Pan was rightly the god of this particular operation of magic art. 'Therefore say I, let Hermes first be invoked.'

So much by way of preamble.

The First Working of this High Magick Art was therefore an invocation of Hermes, who was also the god of thieves and vagabonds. At 11.30 pm of the last day of the year 1913, Crowley duly opened the temple, 'invoking also Thoth by the Egyptian formulae'.

Thoth is the Egyptian form of Hermes, and the ceremony which opened the temple – it has been preserved and is called Ritual 671 – was an invocation of the Egyptian god. *The Paris Working* comprises in all twenty-four workings, and it seems that on each occasion the temple was opened with Ritual 671, either in full or in a shortened form. It is too long to quote in full.

THE BUILDING OF THE PYRAMID

The Magus with Wand. On the Altar are Incense, Fire, Bread, Wine, the Chain, the Scourge, the Dagger and the Oil. In his left hand he taketh the Bell.

Two strokes on the bell.

Hail! Asi! Hail, Hoor-Apep! Let The silence Speech beget!

Banishing spiral dance (to the left).

The Words against the Son of Night, Tahuti³ speaketh in the Light.

1 Osiris. 2 The dragon of the deep which is beginning to stir. 3 Thoth (Mercury), god of magic.

Knowledge and Power, twin warriors, shake The Invisible; they roll asunder The darkness; matter shines, a snake. Sebek¹ is smitten by the thunder – The Light breaks forth from under.

He goes to the West, in the centre of the base of Thoth, Asi and Hoor.

O Thou, the Apex of the Plane
With Ibis² head and Phoenix Wand
And Wings of Night! Whose serpents strain
Their bodies, bounding the beyond.
Thou in the light and in the Night
Art one, above their moving might!

He scourges the buttocks, cuts a cross on the heart and binds chain round forehead, saying:

The Lustral Water! Smite thy flood Through me – lymph, marrow and blood! The Scourge, the Dagger and the Chain Cleanse body, breast and brain!

He anoints the wounds, saying:

The Fire informing! Let the oil Balance, assain, assoil.

[Etc.]

(Thus is the Great Pyramid Builded.)

Initiation Followeth.

I know not who I am!
I know not whence I come.
I know not where I go.
I seek, but what, I do not know!
I am blind and bound; but I
Have heard one cry
Ring through Eternity:
Arise and follow me!
Asar Un-nefer!³ I invoke
That Fourfold Horror of the Smoke.
Unloose the Pit! by the dread Word
That Seth Typhon⁴ hath heard

¹ The Crocodile deity who swallows the sun in the evening.

² Thoth who carries a wand with a phoenix head.

^{3 &#}x27;Myself made Perfect' or Osiris Justified. 4 The Guardian of the Abyss.

Sazaz Sazaz Ananatasan Sazaz.

(Pronounce this backwards, but it is very dangerous; it opens the Gates of Hell.)

A pause.

The Fear of Darkness and of Death, The Fear of Water and of Fire, The Fear o' th' Chasm and the Chain, The Fear of Hell and the Dead Breath, The Fear of Him, the demon dire That on the Threshold of the Inane Stands with his dragon fear to slay The Pilgrim of the Way. These I pass by with force and care, Advance with fortitude and wit In the straight Path; or else their snare Were surely infinite.

Staggers and falls back to earth. Suit action to words, using chain, scourge and dagger.

Asar! who clutches at my throat? Who pins me down? Who stabs my heart? I am unfit to pass within This Pylon of the Hall of Maat'²

This ritual in full took half an hour to perform. At the end of it, the two magicians (who had successfully hurried through the rent veil of matter) were in the right frame of mind for the next part of the proceedings. In his account of this First Working, Crowley was unusually succinct. He said, 'And upon the stroke of midnight did the first words and acts of the *Accendat* strike upon the *Akasa*.' *Accendat* means 'Let it be lighted up', and is said of the first words or prayers or incantations. The *Akasa* is a Sanskrit word for the ether, or the all-pervading material of the universe; the *Akasa* is the true medium of sound, air being secondary. The kindling that Crowley had in mind was of the body as well as the mind. This is made clear from the versicle, or Holy Hymn to Hermes, which they then began to recite.

Jungiter in vati vates: rex inclyte rhabdou
Hermes tu venias, verba nefanda ferens.
(Jointly, the bard in the bard, O famous king of the wand,
Hermes, mayest thou come bearing unspeakable words.)

1 Osiris. 2 The goddess of truth and justice.

The two 'bards' – who were now coupled – were, of course, Crowley and Neuburg.

'Then immediately did Mercury manifest in his first form as it is written in *Liber Ararita* I, 8¹: "Thou hast appeared to me as a young boy mischievous and lovely, with Thy winged globe and its serpents set upon a staff."

Astrally, Crowley saw the temple full of thousands of flashing caducei of gold and yellow, the serpents alive and moving and Hermes bearing them. 'But so young and so mischievous was He that the sacrifice was impossible.'

Hermes had manifested in Neuburg, but Neuburg (Hermes) had behaved in such a silly fashion that the sex act (the sacrifice) was bungled. (Crowley was playing the part of the woman.)

'Then I closed the temple at 1.40 am *die Jovis* [Thursday], thinking to renew the Rite in the evening, in the hope of obtaining Hermes in his next phase.

'And Blessing and Worship to the Holy One, the Ineffable, the Lord of the Serpent and the Dove! Amen.'

The invoking of gods and the conjuring up of demons to manifest appearance is part of the magical tradition. Crowley's teacher in the Golden Dawn was Allan Bennett. In one of Bennett's notebooks, dated 1899, when he was seeing Crowley daily, there is a parchment talisman of Mercury. Underneath is written: 'Vitalised Mercury [the talisman or pantacle] between 2.30 and 4.30 by placing it upon the Spirit's Head and (Nov. 8th, I think) binding him to form a link with it and to infuse into it all the power he had in the way of Wisdom (cocaine).'

In Magick in Theory and Practice, Crowley explains the order of this kind of ceremony. Firstly, the magician invokes the god by devout supplication and begs that he may deign to send the appropriate Archangel. The magician then beseeches the Archangel to send the Angel or Angels of that sphere to his aid. At the Angel's appearance, he conjures him to send the intelligence in question; and this intelligence he conjures with authority to produce the spirit, and to the spirit he issues commands. Thus, it was neither difficult nor dangerous for Allan Bennett or (to give him his magical title) Brother Iehi Aour, once he'd got the spirit before him, to place the talisman on his head. The addition of the word 'cocaine' reveals that this drug was used in the ceremony and it doubtless helped the materialisation.

1 Liber DCCCXIII vel Ararita sub figura DLXX by Aleister Crowley, about 1909. This is one of the so-called 'Holy Books of Thelema'.

193

The next invocation of Hermes, described under the rubric of the Second Working, was done as planned during the following night. Crowley had meanwhile made out of yellow wax an image of the god in the form of a phallus. He was pleased with his handiwork and described it as very beautiful.

The brethren arrived in a receptive frame of mind, assisted by a good dinner with brandy or champagne and perhaps the drug proper to Hermes, *anhalonium lewinii*, which gives one beautiful visions.

The incense¹ was lit and the temple opened at 11.20 pm. Three of Crowley's poems were used in the invocation.

At the Ending of the Light,
At the Limits of the Night,
Stood Mercury before the Unborn ones of Time.
Then was formulated the Universe;
Then came forth the Gods thereof,
The aeons of the Bornless Beyond.
Then was the Voice vibrated;
Then was the Name declared.
At the Threshold of Entrance,
Between the Universe and the Infinite,
In the Sign of the Enterer²
Stood Mercury, as before him
The aeons were proclaimed.
In Symbols did he record them;
In Breath did he vibrate them:

This was taken from 'The Rite of Mercury' which was one of 'The Rites of Eleusis', publicly performed at Caxton Hall in October and November, 1910, by 'Mr Aleister Crowley with distinguished assistance' which included Miss Leila Waddell, his

For between the Light and the Darkness did he stand.

1 The Beast was rather partial to incense, even for secular purposes. I found among his papers after his death this letter from a landlord of his in the 'thirties: 'My dear Crowley, please forgive me if I ask you to discontinue the use of incense while in this place. I don't mind it myself, but too many people can't tolerate it. I had a complaint this afternoon—and unfortunately it is too insidious to be confined to one room. A room at the very top of the house might allow of its use, but not the one you occupy at present. Yours &c.'

2 A gesture, representing the projection of magical force, in which the two arms are thrust forward at shoulder level, and a step taken by the right foot.

Scarlet Woman; and Mr Victor Neuburg, his lover of *The Paris Working*.

The next invocatory poem which in *The Equinox* immediately follows the one aforequoted is under the rubric

The Temple in Darkness:

O Light in Light! O flashing wings of fire! The swiftest of the moments of the sea Is unto thee

Even as some slow-foot Eternity With limbs that drag and wheels that tire. O subtle-minded flame of amber gyre.

It seems a spark of gold
Grown purple, and behold!
A flame of grey!
Then the dark night-wings glow
With iridescent indigo,
Shot with some violet ray...

O Hermes! Messenger of inmost thought!
Descend! Abide! Swift coursing in my veins
Shoot dazzling pains,
The Word of Selfhood integrate of Nought,
The Ineffable Amen! The Wonder wrought.
Bring death if life exceed!
Bid thy pale Hermit bleed,
Yet life exude;
And Wisdom and the word of him

And Wisdom and the word of him Drench the mute mind grown dim With quietude!

Fix they sharp lightnings in my night! My spirit free! Mix with my breath and life and name thy mood And self of Thee.

Finally, these verses which are too long to quote in full:

Majesty of Godhead, Wisdom-crownéd Tahuti, Lord of the Gates of the Universe: Thee we invoke!

O Thou of the Ibis head: Thee, Thee we invoke!

Thou who wieldest the Wand of Double Power¹: Thee, Thee we invoke!

Thou who bearest in Thy left hand the Rose and Cross of Light and Life: Thee, Thee we invoke!

1 The god of the two equinoxes or double horizon, Hoor-Makhu.

O Thou whose head is as an Emerald, and Thy Nemyss¹ as the night-sky blue! Thou whose skin is of flaming orange, as though it burned in a furnace: Thee, Thee we invoke!

The reciting of these poems took twenty minutes to perform. And afterwards, at 11.40, the Latin versicle, *Jungiter in vati vates* ('Jointly, the bard in the bard'), was intoned; it coincided, as before, with the sexual operation of which it was a very brief description. It took a quarter of an hour. What happened afterwards is described by Crowley thus:

Immediately Fra. L.T. completely lost control, and although a man of some education, degraded himself and dispersed the holy invoked Prana² by defacing this volume³ with meaningless scrawls opposite,⁴ declaring them to be the inspiration of Thoth, which were unworthy even of his ape.⁵ In this way a great part of the virtue of the rite was lost.

In Magick in Theory and Practice, Crowley writes that immediately after the Licence to Depart, and the conclusion of the Work, the Magician should sit down and write up the record. This, then, had been Neuburg's task, but he seems to have had hysterics instead, and offended Crowley's sense of magical propriety.

The Licence to Depart or dismissal of the evoked forces is stated in these words:

And now I say unto thee, depart in peace unto thine habitations and abodes – and may the blessing of the Highest be upon thee in the name of (here mention the divine name suitable to the operation, or a name appropriate to redeem that spirit); and let there be peace between thee and me; and be thou very ready to come, whensoever thou art invoked and called!

A footnote supplied by Crowley says: 'It is usual to add "either by a word, or by a will, or by this mighty Conjuration of Magick Art."'

If, however, the spirit does not disappear immediately, it is a sign that there is something wrong. The Magician should at once reconsecrate the magic circle with the utmost care. Then he should

1 Mantle.

2 The vital forces.

3 The Esoteric Record.

4 On the verso side of the page.

repeat the dismissal, and if this does not make the spirit depart, he should perform the appropriate banishing ritual and add conjurations to the same effect. 'In these circumstances, or if anything else suspicious should occur, he should not be content with the apparent disappearance of the spirit, who might easily make himself invisible and lie in ambush to do the Magician mischief when he stepped out of the Circle – or even months afterwards.'

The life of a Magician is clearly one of dedication.

Fortunately, the results of the Second Working have been preserved in *The Esoteric Record*. From it we learn that after invoking Hermes, 'according to the Secret Rites' (the sex act), the god proceeded to answer questions put to him. O.S.V. asked the questions and L.T. heard the replies, that is to say, the god was invoked in him or he saw and heard the god astrally.

The first question that O.S.V. asked was, 'Are we working right?'

'No,' was the disconcerting answer.

'What's wrong?' said O.S.V.

'The time and, to a lesser extent, the place.'

'What is the right time?' asked O.S.V.

'Three hours before dawn.'

'Does this apply to Mercury alone or to all the gods?'

'To Mercury alone.'

'Are we to invoke Mercury again?'

'Yes.'

'Tomorrow?'

'No.'

'When, then?'

'On the day of the full moon.'

'What god shall we invoke tomorrow?'

'Thoth.'

'But Thoth is Mercury,' argued O.S.V.

'You will get another aspect,' replied L.T.

Although it was Neuburg speaking, it should not be thought that he was uttering his own views; he was just the mouthpiece of the god.

'Shall we not use the same versicle?' asked O.S.V., meaning the incantation beginning *Jungiter in vati vates*, the invoking words.

'It does not matter,' replied L.T.

'Shall I make statues of all the gods!'

'No.'

'Shall I make tablets of all the gods?'

⁵ It is said that Thoth, and Mercury too, has two sides or voices, one of which speaks wisdom, the other – the side of the ape – gibbers nonsense.

'Yes.'

'What tablets?'

'Tablets with the names only.'

'In what order shall we invoke the gods?'

'The proper order is - Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Luna, Sol.'

'Will he help in geomancy?'1

'Yes.'

(In the margin Crowley wrote, 'He did.')

'And also in the conduct of affairs?'

'In some, not in all.'

'In business?'

'In some business.'

'What ones?'

'Those in connection with the writing of books, with money, and with love.'

There is no indication of the speed at which these questions were asked. Neuburg was in a trance. Were there long pauses between questions or between questions and answers? At this point, however, a pause did ensue. Then Crowley, as if he had run out of questions, returned to an earlier train of thought.

'How can we invoke Mercury better?' he asked.

'Use a golden pentagram, placing the same in a prominent position; drink yellow wine and eat fish before the ceremony. Let the clock be removed.'

These instructions, so patly delivered through the mouth of Neuburg, were not in his usual style, nor were they in line with his knowledge. He was only a Zelator of the Order; and although he had been trained by Crowley for several years now, he was but an uncertain and timid youth. 'Frater L.T.,' said Crowley elsewhere in *The Esoteric Record*, 'has a fault, which is introspection. The point is that he is a man of thought, rather than of action.' And Crowley had a fault; it was lack of introspection, but he had not realized it.

Question: Can you suggest any improvements in the ceremonies, especially that of Jupiter?

Answer: Scarlet and silver should be worn, and the crown by O.S.V. Brother L.T. is to wear the scarlet robe, violets are to be strewn and trodden with bare feet.

The violets trodden with bare feet would evoke the spirit of the glade, through which trots the lustful Pan.

1 Crowley's method of geomantic divination was that of making random dots with a pencil on a sheet of paper.

Question: Give a distinct proof of your¹ presence, appreciable by the intelligence of O.S.V.

Answer: Let the wand,² or one, become nine,³ this is the sign of Priapus, but afterwards nothing.

O.S.V.: I understand and agree the proof.

The wand is the sign of the god of fertility, Priapus. Again, these answers show knowledge superior to that possessed by L.T.

The third Working was commenced at about midnight the following day. As commanded by Hermes during the previous working, the clock, symbol of time – they were to stand outside time – was removed; hence Crowley says it was 'about' midnight but, in contradiction of this, he gives the time to the minute of the conclusion of part of the ceremony: 'at 12.57 am dies *Saturni* [Saturday] the *Quia Patris* was ended.'

The *Quia Patris* is one of the speeches of the Chorus from Crowley's mystery play, *The Ship*, which was published in *The Equinox*, number 10.

For of the Father and the Son
The Holy Spirit is the norm:
Male-female, quintessential, one,
Man-being veiled in Woman-form,
Glory and worship in the Highest,
Thou Dove, mankind that deifiest,
Being that race – most royally run
To spring sunshine through winter storm!
Glory and worship be to Thee,
Sap of the world-ash, wonder tree!

During the versicle *Jungiter in vati vates* which preceded the *Quia Patris*, Crowley approached the state of ecstatic possession, during which he says, he saw the Triple Cross of the Grand Hierophants, then Hermes himself. As the versicle coincided with the commencement of the sexual act, this is not altogether unexpected or surprising.

The temple was closed at 2.15 am.

The Esoteric Record for this, the Third Working, begins by giving Brother L.T.'s description of Hermes: the god was 'essentially phallic', but in his hand is a book called Book II, which has

1 The god's. 2 The phallus.

3 The wand (the penis) is one; nine is the number of creation; hence let the wand (one) become nine (erect or creative).

199

106 pages. On the last page is a luminous four-pointed star which (the Magicians decide) is to be identified with the eye of Shiva, the symbolic eye in Shiva's forehead. It is closed; if, however, Shiva should choose to open it, its light would destroy the universe. The sub-title of the book was BIA, 'force'.

A dissertation followed, the nature of which can be gathered from this extract:

Every drop of semen which Hermes sheds is a world. The technical term for his semen is KRATOS [might]. Those worlds are held in chains, but invisibly. People upon the worlds are like maggots upon an apple – all forms of life bred by the worlds are in the nature of parasites. Pure worlds are flaming globes, each a conscious being. Number of worlds ejected 7,482,135 = 9

The name of this Phallus is Thoth, Hermes or Ma. Ma is the god who seduced the Phallus away from the Yoni; hence the physical Universe. All worlds are excreta; they represent wasted semen. Therefore all is blasphemy. This explains why man made god in his own image.

And so on and so forth.

An appraisal of these rather negative theories would extend this book to an unmerciful length, but for those who are interested, the theme is taken up again in Crowley's *Gospel According to St Bernard Shaw* (unpublished) in which some of the material of *The Paris Working* is used.

In the course of this part of *The Esoteric Record* Crowley interjected that he was making a silent prayer and thanksgiving to Hermes. He commented that, in such workings, one can obtain magic force from women as well as men – the technique can be equally heterosexual – but to use women 'is more dangerous to the career of the magician'. He does not explain why, but women, and the whole complex of ideas for which they stand, have always been a deep pit for men, especially for those engaged in secret rites. And, Crowley continued, there is the danger of impregnation – a surprising statement from him. This is the only occasion, amid the copious accounts of his sexual operations, on which this consideration is mentioned. But, added Crowley, this can be guarded against in the obvious way.

To obtain (the vision of) Hermes perfectly, a cock, symbol of concupiscence, should be slain in his honour, and the blood drunk as a sacrament. For those who have an eye for detail, the throat of the cock should be cut over the 'great image'; this was

the wax 'phallic' image of the god which Crowley had placed on the altar; and, in order to catch all the drops of blood, which are thought of as the vehicle of the *prana* or vital force, the image should be placed in a vessel, preferably shaped like the yoni.

Hermes should be invoked on eight consecutive nights, beginning with a Wednesday, the day sacred to this god.

At this point it is recorded that Hermes advised the two magicians 'to feed in greater abundance'; and he promised to protect them, but from what exactly is not made clear.

What follows after this is a little discursive. Hermes instructed Crowley and Neuburg to ask question of him the following night, Sunday, by geomancy, and without performing any rites. On Monday they were to invoke Jupiter, but 'we shall get not so much information as aid from Jupiter'.

And, 'It is very important to have banquets'.

Neuburg, who this time was the interrogator, asked Crowley, who was in a trance, if Hermes will 'help to this end?'

It is not clear what the end was, but the answer – 'He doesn't know and he doesn't care' – is conclusive.

Crowley later embroidered this with the comment that Hermes said, 'Don't be such an ass as to think how you are going to do a thing; just do it.' This is typical of Crowley's brash attitude as well.

Further instruction was forthcoming. In the rites of Luna and Venus, the exoteric words of which are printed in *The Equinox*, number 6, Brother O.S.V. should work with a woman.

'He refuses to tell me when I am to have this woman; he says it is a question of common sense. He says do it; don't ask about it.'

A silence ensued. Crowley was lost in the contemplation of Hermes in his great aspect of 'vehicle of the energy of the highest. He is that which fertilises the luminiferous ether, the strain in it which produces what is called matter.'

The previous day had brought a message from Crowley's friend, Walter Duranty, later Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times*, who was then in Paris – a message 'which may prove to be good news of two matters, both of a Jupiterian nature' (i.e. money). He had also received a letter promising a valuable introduction.

No work was done on Sunday for their prayers to Hermes had been answered in the form of a gift of a cold to Brother O.S.V. and ill-temper to Brother L.T.

Crowley had contemplated the sleeping body of Brother L.T., had woken him up and ordered him to get out of bed and 'transcribe the record', presumably from their notes made during the working. But this led only to 'two fine fights'. It is unlikely, however, that the fights amounted to anything, Crowley being much the bigger and stronger man. O.S.V. explained the episode as a sign of excess of magical force which the working had generated.

Of the Fourth Working it is recorded that Crowley, having a bad cold, was confined to bed, and that there was a 'complete cessation of good news'. Crowley explained that these difficulties and vexations were due to disobeying Hermes' orders – 'the suggestion made by Hermes of a further sacrifice was meant to be obeyed' – and to the attempt on Crowley's part 'to replace the real thing by its symbol'.

However, by Monday afternoon the two magicians had become reconciled; Brother L.T., who had been wandering about the streets of Paris, returned to the temple where he sacrificed to the glory of Jupiter, a phrase which reveals, or rather conceals, a sexual rite, of which the versicle appertaining is a sufficient comment. ('Who therefore let us invoke by the secret Rite and this holy Versicle.')

Haud secus ac puerum spumanti semini vates
Lustrat, dum gaudens accipit alter aquas;
Sparge, precor, servis, hominum rex atque deorum
Juppiter omnipotens, aurea dona, tuis.
('Thus the bard purifies the boy with foaming semen,
While the other in his orgasm receives the waters.
O omnipotent Juppiter, king of men and gods,
Sprinkle, I pray, thy golden gifts on thy servants.')

By 9.00 pm the ceremony had been duly performed, though with 'maimed rites' because of Crowley's cold.

The brethren talked to each other from 10.00 pm, when the temple was closed, until about 1.00 am, when, in spite of the temple being closed, Neuburg beheld Jupiter and saw before his eyes these words: Via est hodie. Nomina sanctissimorum in felicitate habent viam. Deus dedit signum in via. ('The way is today. The names of the most holy in felicity have the way. God gave a sign in the way.')

According to *The Esoteric Record*, Crowley beheld Hermes at some earlier stage of the proceedings. He – Hermes – was in his

character of the messenger, young, and bearing the caduceus. Crowley saw him standing upon the altar, poised upon his right toe. And Neuburg, who knew that Crowley was gazing upon the god, lifted up his voice and asked, 'What saith he?'

'I am the messenger of the gods and I send you wreaths,' replied Crowley.

Hermes, Crowley explained in *The Esoteric Record*, appeared to him as 'fixed light, the colour thereof being pale gold'.

'Will the working be successful in its object?' asked Neuburg who, one might think, was a little anxious about the finances.

The reply was reassuring.

'Yea, verily and amen.'

L.T. then asked if there was any message of a personal nature for O.S.V.

And O.S.V. replied, or to be exact the god replied through O.S.V., that he would have rather startling news, probably by tomorrow morning, and it could be included under the general heading of *good*.

'And will Brother L.T. get news too?' asked L.T. timidly.

'Yes, news is coming to him,' replied O.S.V., 'soft news, like the body of a dove, from England.'

What is surprising about the questions which were put to Hermes is that they are of a commonplace kind; moreover, they reveal hesitation and bashfulness, and even confusion on the part of the interrogator so that he asks a question which he has asked already and to which he has been more or less given an answer. I should have thought that this would so annoy Hermes that he would vanish immediately. On the other hand, when Hermes spoke through Crowley, he showed a little more dash – 'He doesn't know and he doesn't care.'

'Are the gods pleased with the ceremonies?' asked Brother L.T. 'Yea, they rejoice exceedingly,' was the reply.

This is fatuous. I am sure that Hermes and the other gods, with the one exception perhaps of Pan, could not have cared less. Among the questions and answers of *The Esoteric Record* there is not one which asks, simply, 'Are we heading for war?' Or 'How much longer will the Tzar keep his throne?' Or, to think of a question a little nearer to Crowley's interests, 'Will scientists discover a cure for syphilis; if so, when?' Crowley was too unworldly to think of these ephemeral interests.

During the course of Monday's working, O.S.V., who was the seer, conjured up before his ecstatic vision a picture of Mercury

in shimmering gold against a background of purple and grey, rent by violet flashes. 'Now he comes forward, kissing me on the mouth, laying his Caduceus on my Phallus.' The continuation of this vision reveals only Crowley's megalomania and identification with Christ, a residue of his earliest years when he lived amid the mysteries of the Christian religion. Then this inexplicable behaviour on the part of Mercury is recorded. 'He now puts his tongue into my mouth. It is not like the tongue of a man but of a serpent or an ant-eater; he runs it all over my brain, making the skull luminous, transparent, phosphorescent.'

After Mercury had informed Crowley that he will give him the wisdom of the serpent, he went on to say that he, Crowley, needed the devotion of four men and four women; and that the four men will be deformed, and the four women will come from the four quarters of the earth.

A gorgeous range of mountains, the like of which he had not seen even in the Himalayas, now came before his gaze, mountains with clouds of orange sunrise flaming upon them. There was something unusual about them; their crest curled over and rolled onwards like the crest of a wave. And with one foot on the crest stood Mercury, with soft flames of orange, green, and purple around him.

Crowley immediately made a list of four of his followers who were deformed, beginning with Brother Lampada Tradam who had a curvature of the spine. At a later date, he added the one-eyed Norman Mudd. He had, of course, no difficulty in finding among the eighty or so women who had been to date his more serious mistresses, four who came from different continents.

I now see the eightfold star of Mercury suddenly blazing out; it is composed of four fleurs-de-lys with rays like anthers, bulrushes in shape, between them. The central core has the cypher of the grand master, but not the one you know. Upon the cross are the Dove, the Hawk, the Serpent and the Lion. Also one other symbol, yet more secret.

Now behold fiery swords of light. All this is upon a cosmic scale. All the distances are astronomical. When I say 'Sword', I have a definite consciousness of a weapon many millions of miles in length . . .

These visions were so dazzling that even Crowley felt they called for some objective comment. He admitted that he had never before seen such beautiful skyscapes; the pink clouds were like the flight of birds, now like the flight of serpents, their colours mingling with the background of purple and green.

'Anhalonium visions must be very similar,' said Crowley, as if he had no first-hand knowledge of this vision-producing drug.

(He was, in fact, using it.)

After seeing the flying serpents disappear in the Turneresque clouds, Crowley came out of his trance and declared that it was all over. The temple was then closed but a discussion broke out between the two brethren. It began by L.T.'s saying that through these rites they were unloosing a huge force, and he expressed the fear that, in time, it would become dangerous, 'international complications' and so on.

Crowley added a marginal note to the effect that, six months later, world war broke out, as if the war had been due to *The Paris Working*.

Neuburg, whom Crowley was beginning to think obsessed, was appalled, and he urged O.S.V. not to let any other worshippers

join in, especially persons under the age of thirty.

This discussion on the nature of the holy rites led Crowley to observe that the celebrants should *not* interchange their roles; that is to say that in these homosexual rites, Crowley should remain passive and Neuburg active, and Crowley should be the 'priest' (i.e. active) only in invocations of feminine deities, when women would be used. Crowley thus remained true to his nature. But the occult reason he advanced for his attitude is, at least to me, obscure – namely, that 'only black gods are hermaphrodite', with the exception of cases of divine possession.

Of course he loved making the most outrageous statements. Underneath, perhaps, he believed in what he was saying, but, if

challenged, he was ready to laugh the matter away.

The supreme rite would be to bring about a climax in the death of the victim. By this rite, one would attain the summit of the Magical Art. Even better would be to slay a girl, preferably a willing victim, for if she is in opposition, this would introduce a hostile current into the proceedings. After violating her, she should be cut into nine pieces. Here Crowley particularly noted that she should *not* be eaten, but her head, arms and legs should be cut off and the trunk quadrisected. The names of the appropriate gods are to be written on the skin; the arms are then to be flayed and burnt in honour of Pan or Vesta; the legs, after similar treatment, should be offered to Priapus, Hermes, or Juno; the right shoulder is sacred to Jupiter, the left to Saturn; the right buttock to Mars.

the left to Venus; the head should not be flayed but simply burnt and in honour of either Juno or Minerva.

Crowley concluded his account of this 'rite' by observing that it 'should not be employed on ordinary occasions, but rarely, and then for great purposes; and it should not be disclosed to the vulgar'.

Finally, the two Magicians decided that these instructions partook of the character of black, 'or at least grey', magic, and with this the discussion ended.

For the Fifth Working, the temple was opened at about 9.30 pm on 26 January, and the rite was performed *ut ordinatur*, as it is ordained. This time it was Jupiter and not Hermes who was invoked.

Deus adest. Fatur: 'Sparge verba; opus fiat. Hodie est verbum in nomine Dei: crass est opus.' Et postea: 'O beati qui haec verba noscunt! Ergo sum Deus hodie; aurea dona cras vobis feram.' 'Accipe Dei verba, atque vobis bene erit. Benignus sum in hominum mundo semper.' Deinde: 'Phallum ejaculantem tibe feram in nomine patri[s]. Verbum tibi refert ad fratrem O.S.V., ditto patri, In nomine...'

(God is present. He says: 'Sprinkle words; let the work be done. Today is the word in the name of God; tomorrow is the work.' And afterwards, 'O blessed those who know these words! I am God today; tomorrow I will bring you the golden gifts.' 'Receive the words of God and it will be well with you. I am benevolent always in the world of men.' Then: 'I will bear to you an ejaculating phallus in the name of the father. The word refers to Brother O.S.V., similarly to the father. In the name . . .')

Commented Crowley, 'This promise was very amply fulfilled.' But several promises of Hermes, which were given at this time, were not fulfilled; even Crowley had to recognise this. For instance, after Hermes had kissed Brother L.T. on the lips, naval and phallus, he, Hermes, had announced these happy events to come: within two months, L.T. will go away eastwards and will find a new and happier stratum of Karma. By the summer, he will get married but in the autumn he will return to the Great Work. As for Brother O.S.V., he will also go on a long journey eastwards, leaving L.T. in charge of the temple. 'All quite wrong without a single exception,' wrote Crowley in the record. If, however, Hermes had said that O.S.V. would go on a long journey

westwards, he would have been completely right, for by the end of the year, after the war had broken out, Crowley departed for America.

At this point, Crowley made several observations on the rites, and laid down some new instructions. O.S.V. was always to be the first to scry, that is to look into the crystal (his golden topaz in his Calvary cross); this reveals that the gods had manifested through the shewstone and not, apparently, without the aid of this instrument. The scryer would dictate to the other who would write down the visions.

L.T. was always to be the priest, that is to say he was to take the active part in the sexual operation.

The rites were never to be performed for more than six nights in succession, and four were preferable.

They should not begin earlier than nine at night, and the ceremony should not last longer than three and a half hours.

The floor of the temple should be painted white but on festivals and special occasions black and white or red and white squares. Soft stringed music was permissible.

Finally, the celebrants should not be bare-headed but should wear head-dresses of white 'or such other colour as may be indicated'.

A list of colours of certain gods follows. It begins with Priapus, the Greek and Roman god of procreation, and protector of gardens and vineyards. The worship of this god, whose visible emblem was the phallus, was widespread, and in parts of Italy extended throughout the Christian era to modern times. Crowley was familiar with the many statues and reliefs of Priapus which are reproduced in the later edition (edited by the antiquary Thomas Wright) of Richard Payne Knight's An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus lately existing in Isernia; to which is added a Discourse on the Worship of Priapus, and its connection with the Mystic Theology of the Ancients, 1786. Payne Knight, antiquary and amateur architect, went to Italy in 1767 and uncovered the cult.

The colours of Priapus, according to Crowley, are yellow and purple.

The colours of Iacchus, or Bacchus, the god of drinkers, who is represented either as an effeminate young man or as a riotous old man, crowned with vine and ivy leaves, are scarlet and green. Bacchus was the other name of Dionysus, the god of vegetation, of fruit trees, and especially of the vine. Dionysus, Bacchus,

Iacchus – call him by what name you will – appealed strongly to Crowley because of the orgiastic nature of his activities. In the Dionysiac processions, he is surrounded by satyrs who carry the phallus. His animal form is that of a bull.

Venus, the Greek Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, the mother of love, the queen of laughter and the patroness of courtesans, had the colours, in Crowleian symbology, of blue, white and gold. She was not invoked in *The Paris Working*, which was an entirely homosexual rite, but Crowley composed a 'holy hymn' to her for use during a heterosexual rite of some other working.

Tu Venus orta mari venias tu filia Patris, Exaudi penis carmina blanda, precor, Ne sit culpa nates nobis futuisse viriles, Sed caleat cunnus semper amore meo.

('Thou, O Venus, risen from the sea, come thou daughter of the Father,

Hearken to the bland songs of the penis, I pray, Let it be no sin to us to have fucked the virile bum, But let the cunt always be hot with my love.")

Minerva, the Greek Pallas Athena, the goddess of handicrafts, of war and wisdom, who sprang from Jupiter's head, the goddess who could prolong life and bestow the gift of prophecy, was given the colours of white and silver with a little dark blue.

Finally, Pan who was closest to Crowley's heart, was given the appropriate colour of crimson.

These colours were not arbitrarily selected; they can be justified by the Law of Correspondences. Crimson, the colour of blood and, by analogy, of excitement and passion, is obviously suitable for Pan, the god of lust. And the royal colour of purple, the wearing of which was restricted to the Roman Emperors, is appropriate to Priapus, for is not the phallus, symbolically considered, a little king or princelet? Similarly, the colours of blue, white and gold, symbolic of loyalty, innocence, and faith, are fitting for the goddess of beauty.

The Sixth Working, which was also an invocation of Jupiter, was a failure, L.T. being unable to produce the right degree of enthusiasm (erection).

Crowley began his account of the Seventh Working with the observation that, so far as he could see, nothing great had hap-

pened as the result of the previous Jupiterian operation. 'Yet tonight I feel more confidence than usual; I am in a highly nervous or electric stage.' His cold was better and during the day he had gone for a fairly long walk and had dined out. Now he felt tired, excited, and feverish. 'Jupiter, bring all to a good end!'

The temple was opened at about 10.00 pm and the rite was performed *ut ordinatur*. During its climax, the two magi beheld 'an universe of the most brilliant purple with golden stars, and Jupiter seated on his throne surrounded by the Four Beasts upon thick clouds borne upon a phalanx of eagles.'

This requires no comment, apart from the quaternity of beasts which are the beasts of Ezekiel's vision; it is what it says, a vision of Jupiter, the light-bringer. Appropriately, Jupiter is amid the stars and his throne is upheld by eagles – the eagle, the oak, and the thunderbolt being his emblems.

Next, a peacock appeared. According to Neuburg, this meant 'change, journeys, motion', and implied 'improvements'. The peacock was then crowned, and it regarded itself in the looking-glass.

Neuburg's interpretation of the peacock seems to me to reveal more the nature of his desires than anything else. The peacock, especially its tail, is conspicuous by its dark rich colours, in which green predominates. It is, in fact, a symbol of spring, and was so regarded by the alchemists of old when they observed these colours in their melting-pots. Spring was approaching and doubtless the two brethren, through their invocations, were feeling youthful.

The temple was closed at about 11.20 pm.

It is probable that a knock on the door of Crowley's flat brought the proceedings, which were anyhow beginning to tail off, to an end; for after 11.30 pm the magi were entertaining three friends who had unexpectedly turned up. They were Walter Duranty, 'the fair damozel J.C.', and 'the good knight, my brother in arms, Sir Lionel'. I do not know who Sir Lionel was, but his knighthood was probably conferred by Crowley, the Supreme and Holy King of the O.T.O. The 'fair damozel J.C.' was the hollow-cheeked Jane Cheron, who wore her fingernails long and who had crow's feet at the corners of her eyes. Crowley occasionally made love to her and smoked a pipe or two of opium with her, she being 'a devotee of that great and terrible god'.

It is not revealed what they did or what they talked about, only that Brother O.S.V. sculptured (in their presence) 'a sacred Phallus' till about 2.00 am, or (the record is obscure here) from

2.00 am to 4.15 am. Finally, the visitors left and he and his brother L.T. went to bed and had a 'wonderful and repeated dream'. Crowley does not give us a clear account of this wonderful dream, but he does say that he remembered mimicking the bourgeoisie and reducing all the objects that appeared in the dream to the yoni and the lingam.

At 9.30 am the post arrived, bringing three things of a Jupiterian nature: a letter from Crowley's lawyers (it certainly contained money or news of money), a pot of opium, and 'a lovepoem of a religious type'. The poem was *Chicago May*; it had come from the printer. There is nothing very Jupiterian about it, nor very religious.

This is my hour of peace; the great sow snores, Blowing out spittle through her blubber lips, Champagne and lust still oozing from the pores Of her fat flanks; then, let my hate eclipse All other lamps of my pale soul, and flare – A curst star sparkling in the strangled air!

This long poem – it covers twenty-three printed quarto pages – is dedicated to Austin Harrison, the editor of *The English Review*, who believed Crowley to be a poet of considerable stature, and who had published his *City of God* and other poems. The titlepage of the rare *Chicago May*, which was supposedly inspired by the American-Irish woman criminal of that nickname, bears this little piece of Crowleian irony: 'The possessor of this copy is earnestly requested to retain the same under lock and key, and in nowise to part with it until the year 1964.' As Crowley had little hope of selling any copies, he added to the title-page, 'Price FIVE GUINEAS'.

Of the Eighth Working, which began on Sunday, 11 January, Crowley recorded that he 'saw a most remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy of Hermes', but he did not disclose what it was. 'Also two excellent matters have come to fruition.' A discreet silence hangs over them too. But Crowley did tell us that a brother of the Order, known both to O.S.V. and L.T., had inherited money; this was probably George Raffalovich, a contributor to *The Equinox*, from whom Crowley had obtained a contribution of five thousand pounds towards the Great Work.

The next day Neuburg was ill. The nature of his malady was not mentioned; perhaps the rites had been too much for him.

On Tuesday, 13 January, O.S.V. and L.T., who was feeling

better, performed *The Mass of the Phoenix* in the house of P.D.F. (I do not know who Frater or Soror P.D.F. was).

The Mass of the Phoenix is a short ritual. Only the optimistic, frolicsome conclusion need be given here.

He [the Mage] eats the second Cake [of Light].
This Bread I eat. This Oath I swear
As I enflame myself with prayer:
'There is no grace: there is no guilt:
This is the Law; DO WHAT THOU WILT!'
He strikes Eleven times upon the Bell, and cries
ABRAHADABRA'

I entered in with woe; with mirth I now go forth, and with thanksgiving, To do my pleasure on the earth Among the legions of the living. He goeth forth.

Crowley was, of course, the author of this 'mass', and if one imagines a magician performing it, his bulky figure inevitably enters the picture. Indeed, Crowley frequently performed it before going forth to enjoy himself among the living and, although he was not aware of it, among the dead too.

The next day, Wednesday, L.T. was again feeling seedy, so O.S.V. took him for a walk in the woods at Fontainebleau.

The Ninth Working was performed on Monday, 19 January. It began at 11.45 pm and concluded at 12.30 am. The whole ceremony lasted, therefore, only three-quarters of an hour, but in Crowley's opinion it was one of the best they had done for Jupiter.

While O.S.V. was invoking Ammon-Ra, the ram-headed spirit of the four elements, his vibrations of the divine name were echoed, to the surprise of the celebrants, by another and unknown voice. Such phenomena were by no means unusual during Crowley's magical ceremonies; unknown voices were frequently heard and unknown presences felt.

At the conclusion of the *Qui Patris*, Brother L.T., who was on his knees before the altar, giving thanks for the illumination experienced during the sexual part of it, beheld 'the colossal form of Jupiter our Father, *manibus plenis*! Yea, with gold were his hands full; praise unto our Father and our God!'

1 The true word of power, according to Crowley's Cabbalistic Working, is ABRAHADABRA.

This was a promise of the complete success of the workings; they had asked Jupiter for money, and there he was bringing it to them.

That night Crowley had a dream which, upon waking, he recreated in the form of a short story. He was delighted with this story which he called 'The Stratagem'. He wrote in the record, 'May it bring fame and fortune!' It brought neither, but it was accepted by Austin Harrison for *The English Review*, and Crowley afterwards had an opportunity of reprinting it, with two other stories, in a booklet issued by the Mandrake Press in their Mandrake Booklets series. 'The Stratagem' is one of the poorest stories I have ever read, and if Joseph Conrad applauded it, as Crowley says in the dedication to Conrad (and others), he must have done so with his tongue in his cheek. It is not even a story, but a long drawn-out anecdote, and the point of it is given away twice before the end.

The Tenth Working began at 11.30 on Tuesday, 20 January. This time, Jupiter in his Egyptian form of Ammon-Ra was invoked; and this holy versicle was addressed to him:

Per regni sancti signum da Jupiter Ammon Da nobis plena munera plena manu.

(By the sign of the sacred kingdom, give, O Jupiter Ammon, Give to us full rewards with a full hand.)

The working was concluded three-quarters of an hour later. 'The Ceremony as usual,' wrote Crowley, as if slightly bored with it all. But he had seen Jupiter 'in the form of Ammon-Ra, plumed and phallic, standing in the East', and during the sex act, which had commenced with the brethrens' quoting (or one of them quoting) the versicle *Per regni* etc., he, Crowley, had lost all sense of physical reality, and he and Neuburg had heard, clearly and distinctly, the sound of astral bells.

The sound of 'astral bells' was frequently heard in the presence of Madame Blavatsky; it was the sign that one of her Masters (Mahatmas) was present. And astral bells and other sounds – the drone of a bee, the whine of a flute, the clash of cymbals – are heard when the serpent of Kundalini is stirred in Yoga.

The next day, Crowley and Neuburg quarrelled or, as Crowley delicately expressed it, 'the Brethren were out of harmony'. But by an effort of will they overcame their ill feeling and sat down together to a full banquet. Then, in good spirits, they returned to

the temple for the Eleventh Working which, like the previous Working, was an invocation of Ammon-Ra.

O.S.V. opened the temple at 11.00 pm, Wednesday, and during the work, when the invoked forces were at their highest pitch, he saw Ammon-Ra. And 'Jupiter Himself' filled the temple. This is obscure but, as far as I can judge, Jupiter manifested in his form of Ammon-Ra to Crowley's internal vision, and in his Roman form he spread his glory amid the temple. In particular, a cone of white light whirled about 'the image of the All-One that is upon the Altar of the Elements'. The only image on the altar that can fit this description was the wax phallus of Priapus, which in the Crowleian system is equated with the hawk-headed sun-god Horus.

This invocation produced a message from Jupiter in the angelic language of John Dee and Edward Kelley to the effect that the gods wished to regain their dominion on earth, and that the two brethren O.S.V. and L.T. were as 'fiery arrows' shot by them, the gods, in their war against the 'slave gods', i.e. Christ, Buddha, Allah.

This is the amorality of *The Book of the Law*, combined with the influence of Nietzsche. Obviously the author of this sort of thing would prefer the riotous behaviour of the gods of Olympus to the Sermon on the Mount: 'Mercy let be off [sic]: damn them who pity! Kill and torture; spare not; be upon them!'

A four-fold sacrifice was demanded, 'and that a sacrifice of cruelty'.

It was promptly executed.

The temple was closed at 1.45 am, but ten minutes later, at 1.55, Neuburg was still unconscious or, as Crowley put it, 'lying entranced'.

At 2.00 am Neuburg had sufficiently recovered to gasp out: "Tetelestai."

Crowley himself was rather worn out and during his night's sleep, which he described as a sleep of exhaustion, it was revealed to him in a dream or in a vision or in a state of brief consciousness during a fitful sleep, that the purpose of the kind of operation which they had performed that night was that of 'freeing of the elemental spirit of an animal soul'. This is done by death, but it may also be done by *complete exhaustion*. The distinction between death and complete exhaustion is a subtle one and Crowley did not draw it, but it must be understood that by complete exhaustion.

1 'It is over.' Christ's last words on the cross.

the person so exhausted is hovering on the brink of death, and it is a purely academic point whether or not he rolls over. The process of exhaustion, however, can be brought about either by pleasure or pain, by excessive sexual indulgence, or by torture.

(In one of the secret O.T.O. documents entitled De Arte Magica, 'Concerning the Magic Art', caput XV 'Of Eroto-comatose lucidity', written by Brother Baphomet, is an account of a ritual by which the celebrant is brought by venery to the point of death the death of a just man. 'The most favourable death is that occurring during the orgasm, and is called Mors Justi. As it is written: Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his!' On physiological grounds, this is an impossible feat for a man in good health, impotence intervening beforehand.)

Crowley observed that the next day, Brother L.T. went about 'overshadowed by Jupiter'. The world appeared to him as a 'vision of the future', a phrase which is best explained by the next sentence: 'His eyes are dilated; he cannot read; his manner is as one stupefied or entranced. In other words, one cannot see and talk to

Jupiter without having a hell of a hang-over.'

The Esoteric Record gives, as usual, some exoteric information. During the last working Crowley had not only seen a vision of Jupiter, but of himself in a past life. As this particular past life is not included among those he saw in a series of visions on Oesopus Island (see Chapter One) an account of it is given here.

In this incarnation, he was a consecrated prostitute at Agrigentum. He did not give us any dates, but we think of this Greek city in southern Sicily at a time when it was at the height of its prosperity and magnificence, before the Carthaginian general, Imilkon,

sacked it in 405 BC.

Agrigentum had many temples for its large population. Grote mentions especially the spacious temple of Zeus Olympius, but Crowley was not on the staff there. He was in a 'temple of the sun', by which he presumably meant a temple dedicated to Apollo. He described it in this brief way: it had a long square outer court; 'in the upper square' was a temple with a façade and pillars - not a very adequate description, for all Greek public buildings of any consequence had façades and pillars and courts. But Crowley's recollection of this incarnation does extend our knowledge of Greek history and religion, for neither Herodotus nor Strabo nor, as far as I know, any other authority, ancient or modern, mentions that this cult of sacred prostitution ever happened so far to the west as Agrigentum. Indeed, Herodotus was shocked when he

found this bizarre practice at Babylon, though he does mention that something of the same kind also occurred at Cyprus.

The internal shrine of this temple of the sun had a circular dome about forty feet across. In the east there was the Altar of Incense, to which priestesses used to carry their offerings; and in the west there was a big font into which was poured the blood of the sacrificial victims. In the north was a door, and in the south a statue of a Syrian sun-god. Crowley did not know the name of this god, but Bacchus rather than Apollo came to his mind. To this description he added this piece of horrible information: 'The great sacrifice of spring was to cut open a bull, and lay a virgin in the hot carcass, there to be violated by the High Priest. She was finally choked in the bull's blood.'

The name of Crowley's incarnation at Agrigentum was either Asteris or Astarte. On second thoughts, Crowley decided for Astarte, the name of the goddess herself. Astarte, also Ishtar and Mylitta, is the Assyrian equivalent of Venus. This is what Herodotus observed of the female devotees of Astarte in Babylon:

The most disgraceful of the Babylonian customs is the following. Every native woman is obliged, once in her lifetime, to have intercourse with a stranger in the temple of Venus. Many rich women, who are too proud to mix with the rest, come in covered wagons, and take up their place at the temple with a numerous train of servants. But the far greater part sit down in the temple of Venus with a crown of cord round their heads. Some are continually coming in; others are going out. Passages marked out in a straight line lead in every direction through the women, along which strangers pass and take their pick. When a woman has once seated herself, she must not return home till some stranger has thrown a piece of silver into her lap, and lain with her outside the temple. He who throws the silver must say thus: 'I lay claim on thee in the name of Mylitta.' The woman will never refuse the money, no matter how small it may be, for it has been made sacred by the act. The woman follows the first man that throws, and refuses no one. But when she has had intercourse and has absolved herself from her obligation to the goddess, she returns home. And she will not submit again, however much you offer her. Those who are endowed with beauty and symmetry of shape are soon set free, but the plain are detained a long time, some for as long as three or four years.

The apocryphal Epistle of Jeremias, verse forty-three, confirms this practice.

Crowley tells us that Astarte used to sit on the steps of the temple of Agrigentum and receive 'sacrifices'. She was therefore a permanent, and not a temporary, sacred prostitute. She practised a fertility rite which made intercourse an act of worship. The *Panchatattva* ritual, which is still performed in India, is similar.

For this reason, Crowley was not ashamed to acknowledge such a profession; besides, it was in another and far-distant life; and doubtless Astarte was called upon to make oracular utterances as well.

The theme was taken up again six years later when Crowley came to establish his own temple at Cephaloedium (Cefalu), on the northern side of Sicily, for part of his oath inscribed in the record of the Abbey under the heading of the Oath of the Beast was that 'I . . . will freely prostitute my body to the lusts of each and every Living Creature that shall desire it'. Not that he ever did so without a sense of bashfulness, due perhaps to his upbringing at English public schools and at Cambridge. He was even self-conscious, as he confessed in his *Magical Record*, at performing the mysteries naked before Mary Butts and Cecil Maitland, two sympathetic onlookers.

Astarte had incurred this incarnation (of a temple prostitute at Agrigentum) because of various misdemeanours – they are not specified – which she had committed in Greece in another incarnation during the previous century. Thus he disclosed his slight distaste for this sort of life. Her incarnations, he told us, had always been at short intervals; she led adventurous lives and always died young.

Crowley saw her so clearly that he was able to give a detailed account of her physical appearance (see page) 254.

Her upbringing had been one of great misery. She was born at Leghorn, the daughter of vine-dressers who, in winter, followed the occupation of wood-cutters. Her adventures began from the time she was snatched away by pirates who raided the coast near her home. Crowley did not tell us how she fared with these pirates, only how she escaped from them – through a shipwreck which cast her upon the coast of Sicily. The people who found her soon discovered that she was an expert prostitute and placed her in a brothel in Agrigentum. But she hated the life.

She was therefore heartily relieved when a young priest made her acquaintance during a spring festival. (Did this festival of spring include visits by the temple priests to the brothel? Crowley suggests that it did.) He bought her out of the brothel, put her through a year's purification, then added her to the temple staff.

To begin with she was not happy in her new and exalted position; she saw only dull routine but, by the 'skill of her embraces', she won the favour of her superiors.

When she was about twenty, she underwent a religious conversion, and began to perform her duties with fervour. She soon acquired a reputation for being inspired, and was occasionally used in public ceremonies.

Her end came suddenly and dramatically. It began by her making a young priest fall in love with her. Soon they 'violated their vows by carnal copulation of an irreligious character'; then she wormed the secret of the temple out of him; the same night she killed him so that he should never be able to tell that he had betrayed the mysteries.

Crowley, however, tells us what this secret was. 'The secret of the temple was the *midnight Sun*. Globes of fire used to gather on the font, and from the other altar, and begin to revolve in the shrine. They would coalesce and then become one, which stood single and unmoving all night, only fading with dawn.'

Having heard the secret, Astarte wanted to see it for herself. She penetrated the shrine at the midnight sacrifice, but was observed by the priests who immediately seized her and passed their swords again and again through her body which was then thrown out into the court at the foot of the temple steps. Thus died Astarte, Crowley's incarnation in ancient Greece.

The Eleventh Working had left Brother L.T. in an entranced condition but a banquet restored him to a comparatively normal state, and by 9.55 pm the next day, he and his brother magician opened the temple for the Twelfth Working which was again an invocation of Jupiter. (All the workings from now on are invocations of Jupiter.)

Crowley did not tell us much about this working. The sacrifice was offered – I think I have made it clear by now what this means – and Frater O.S.V. was so exhausted by it – he loved to exhaust himself in this manner – that he likened himself to a corpse – perinde ac cadaver. The temple was closed at 11.00 pm. Thus ended the First Series of the complete working of Jupiter.

And what, if anything, were the results of it all? Crowley had to ask himself this. 'Well', he said to himself, 'there is certainly

some result; for matters move strangely. Five people who had arranged to come to see me in Paris all failed to turn up; and both business letters (urgent) and private letters remain unanswered. I assume,' he concluded, 'that this is the fallow period which follows the sowing of the seed.'

But he still could not understand it, for, he reasoned, the series of invocations unto Hermes instantly produced a direct result. 'I take it that Jupiter, being a slow and steady God, moves not so easily but with far more power.' He discussed the matter with Brother L.T. who told the same story. It was, really, a little extraordinary.

The next day, the drought broke; a flood of letters and visitors appeared, but all in all it did not amount to anything startling. 'Certainly,' thought Crowley, 'all things that have occurred have been of the nature of Jupiter, but so far there has been no plentiful harvest, naught as it were but green shoots peeping through the earth.'

The temple for the Thirteenth Working opened at about 11.30 pm. The *Quia Patris* began at 12.30 am. After the *Accendat* and *Tu qui es*, Brother O.S.V. 'became inspired in a Terpsichorean manner'. In other words, he began dancing. In *The Esoteric Record*, the dance is described as of the 'seductive-fugitive' order, the kind of dance nearest to the feminine heart of Aleister Crowley.

Tu qui es ('Thou who art') is another speech from Crowley's mystery play, *The Ship*, which begins 'Thou, who art I, beyond all I am . . .' (See page 456.)

The temple was closed at 2.00 am.

Much good force was obtained from this working; also two Jataka stories, that is stories of previous incarnations of the Buddha. This is not absolutely clear, but I take it that Brother O.S.V., not content with seeing some of his own past lives, went on (during the vision) to see some of the Buddha's past lives too. He does not reveal what these stories were, but doubtless they had the same moral tone as the Jataka stories we know. Alternatively, they may have been stories of Crowley's past lives, for he regarded himself as no less than the Buddha, and thus stories from his past lives would be 'Jataka' stories.

During the course of the next day, Brother L.T. obtained a small Jupiterian result, that is to say he received some money; it was probably from his parents in England who did not approve

of their son's companion. And Brother O.S.V. kept an appointment which, he hoped, would lead to vast Jupiterian results.

After the working, the brethren sat chatting, and O.S.V. remembered that, in a previous incarnation, he had been a priestess in a part of the world which he thought was Greece 'of an orient-alised type'. L.T. also recalled one of his previous incarnations; it happened to be at the same period; the place he thought was Crete. O.S.V. agreed with this.

O.S.V.'s name in this incarnation was Aia, a corruption of Gaia, the goddess of the earth. She danced in a temple of black marble with mirrors; she had twenty-eight handmaidens.

Then L.T. appeared. He was a handsome youth with a square golden beard; his name was Mardocles.

If one accepts the principle of reincarnation, there is nothing either improbable or surprising about this.

Mardocles had to be initiated by dancing with Aia.

It is clear from Crowley's description that these initiatory dances were sexual rites. He tells us in his description of this particular dance, that if the Neophyte refused intercourse with the priestess, he was castrated, then put to death.

Aia fell in love with Mardocles, and as a result danced badly. . . . They were both expelled from the temple.

Mardocles and Aia, sad and penniless, wandered into the town. Aia did up one of Mardocles's sandals. Mardocles despised Aia for ruining his career. He, Mardocles, had been a very rich cornmerchant with a very rich father, and had given up everything to be initiated, just as Brother L.T. had given up everything to be initiated in Paris by Brother O.S.V.

Mardocles was about twenty-four or twenty-five but in experience he was much older. He hated Aia but he was too chivalrous to leave her. He cared for Aia only while she danced; he felt he had ruined her career as well as his own. They sat down on a stone, two doors from a cobbler's shop.

Again Aia did up Mardocles's sandal strap. The cobbler came out to see what was going on, took a fancy to Mardocles, and asked him and Aia to supper.

Supper was served in a tiny back room. The cobbler's wife was a shrew; she was also frightfully ugly, like the Duchess in *Alice* said Crowley.

When the cobbler learned that his two guests had been thrown out of the temple, he suggested that they should become his apprentices, and he pointed out that this was their only hope of avoiding being sold as slaves. But they were too proud for this and declined; and after a while they found themselves on sale in the slave-market.

A man called Demetrius, who had a country house and a beautiful wife, bought them both. The wife was a classic type, a Syro-Phoenician beauty – Grecian nose, coal-black curls but a thin mouth with the corners turned down. She was nearly always swathed in purple. Her husband was an easy-going fool, as we might expect.

Aia and Mardocles were employed about the house, but not at menial tasks. 'It was part of the ordinary duty of a servant to amuse the family by various copulations. Only beautiful slaves were chosen for this purpose.' Aia evidently misunderstood the significance of this duty; the copulation, with Mardocles, during or after dinner, in front of the whole family was a moral object lesson to the children in how *not* to behave, for how degrading it is, behaviour fit only for slaves; but Aia (Crowley) could not see this.

Shortly afterwards Aia died of pneumonia; and the story of this incarnation concluded with a remark which Aia made to Mardocles after they had been bought by Demetrius: 'I shall never forget the look you gave me in the slave-market.' She added, as if she had a vague memory of meeting Mardocles in an existence previous to that one, 'I am always unlucky for you, you know; you always have to sacrifice everything for my love. You don't want to in the least; that is because we both have hold of the wrong end of the stick. If only I could leave you . . .'

For the Fourteenth Working, the temple was opened on the stroke of midnight and closed at 1.07 am. It left, as usual, Frater O.S.V completely exhausted, but it was now getting a habit with him to write that he was completely exhausted. In the course of this working, the Jovian or Jupiterian phenomena continued steadily, but they were not of such force as to enable the magi to say that the success of the operation was assured.

During the afternoon, they went 'to the house of a lay sister, and invoked the Lord Jupiter by incense of His sacred herb'; that is to say they called on Jane Cheron and smoked a pipe of opium. Crowley said that this rested them both mentally and physically, then went on to contradict this by adding that it caused a temporary and slight illness. I suspect that the opium made Neuburg ill, but not Crowley who was inured to the drug.

Crowley did not record much of the Fifteenth Working. The temple was opened at 11.15 pm and closed at 12.10 am. The poem *Haud secus*, etc., was 'prolonged' but 'very quiet'. The atmosphere of the temple was extremely good – mellow, rich, velvety, luminous, strong without violence, calm, opulent, etc., etc. The colours were chiefly purple, gold and green. It was decided that this atmosphere was not to be spoilt by allowing any 'loose women and the like' to come in. As for physical presences, there was only a green chameleon-like dancer called Ahanael who is one of the lesser intelligences of Jupiter, the god of the invocation. And there were the usual elementals darting about.

After the *Haud secus* during the Sixteenth Working, the god demanded blood. Jupiter made his wishes known to Crowley in the directest manner possible. Crowley therefore cut the figure four on the breast of Neuburg. Four is the number of Jupiter, eight is the number of Hermes; four is also the number of the Demiurge, the Maker of the World, in the Pythagorean and Cabbalistic systems.

The blood from Neuburg's breast was offered up on the altar of the god.

Neuburg then performed a dance which Crowley, who by this time was in shivasana (one of the better-known postures of yoga), described as wonderful.

Next, Crowley became inspired and entered a trance; and while in this trance, Jupiter informed him that for the four workings during the week to follow, the image (the wax phallus) should be placed in a vesica (a shallow dish in the shape of the voni or female pudenda), and a sparrow or pigeon should be slain before the Accendat. The sparrow must be sacrificed with these words Nunc flavi Jovi spumantem sanguine saevo Passerem . . . ('Now I have blown to Jupiter a sparrow foaming with fierce blood . . . ') 'or such other words as may be suggested by the Art-Bachelor W[alter] D[uranty]'. The blood alone of the sparrow must remain in the vesica, and after the Haud secus, it must be connected with the two magicians by drawing in blood the figure 4 on Neuburg's heart, right and left breast, and navel. The sparrow had to be burnt; and from Sunday midnight to Thursday midnight (the time during which the four next workings were to take place), the brethren were to eat no food and drink, except pure water - apart

1 It was Walter Duranty who translated these hymns into Latin, he being the better Latinist.

from the rich food, wines and liqueurs of the ceremonial banquets which preceded the mystic rites.

The temple closed at midnight exactly, and thus ended the Sixteenth Working.

The purpose of these operations of High Magick Art was to obtain priestly power and, on a lower plane, money. It would therefore be a mistake to think that the celebrants were performing the rites for sexual pleasure. The aim of Brothers O.S.V. and L.T. was congress with gods. Besides, we do not know for certain that they derived, amid these cloudy visions and exhausting sodomitical practices, any pleasure at all.

When signs of success began to appear, Crowley took pains to record, 'It is to be noted that since the beginning of this operation the Bank Rate has fallen to 3 per cent and Consols improved from $71\frac{1}{2}$ to $76\frac{1}{4}$, a gain of over £1,400 to O.S.V. On Saturday O.S.V. received a letter which should bring in £500 within the next two months.'

Thus the brethren's invocations profited the public at large or at least those members of it who held Consols or had an overdraft at the bank, or were paying off a mortgage.

Before concluding his account of the Sixteenth Working, Crowley commented on the inspiration which in the course of it had seized hold of him. 'I should mention,' he said, 'the possession of O.S.V. on Thursday night was the most complete and material possession, and has occurred to him most rarely. The directions were obtained with difficulty, and his whole consciousness was wrapped up in the God, the only expression being in these words, "Sanguis et Semen" (blood and semen).

Crowley was so enraptured that he became almost speechless. Brother L.T., his breast bleeding, was doubtless regarding him with indifference as he staggered about the temple, his eyes veiled, muttering to himself, 'Sanguis et Semen! Sanguis et Semen!'

The Seventeenth Working began in the evening of 2 February; during the course of it O.S.V. 'dedicated the bird to Jupiter and set it free'. He did not, however, open the window and see the bird fly away; the freedom he gave to the pigeon or sparrow was the greatest ever.

According to the Jews, blood is the principal vehicle of the vital force, the energy of the universe. The idea behind a blood sacrifice is to add to the energy (one might say atmosphere) of the ceremony, provided that the blood is shed within the consecrated

circle or triangle and thus retained for the purposes of the celebrants. An animal should be killed the name of which accords with the ceremony: a bird for Jupiter, a ram for Mars, and so on. Virgin animals are preferred because of their greater potential. Those who object to the use of blood can use incense instead.

During this Seventeenth Working, Crowley's passion grew so intense that he lost consciousness. After the *Quia Patris*, Neuburg cut the figure four on his own right breast, 'A marvellous matter followed, but no further rite was accomplished.' Unfortunately Crowley did not say what it was, but it seems to have been more marvellous for Neuburg than for Crowley, because at 1.00 am Neuburg was still too exhausted to speak, and this was ten minutes after the temple had closed.

The Jupiterian banquet of the Eighteenth Working was held at midday, a more convenient time for the day's single meal than the usual dinner hour. It did not proceed smoothly. As Crowley put it, 'the spirit of Mars waxed strong, and O.S.V. tare L.T. with bitter words, to which Fra. L.T., like a good brother as he is, replied with modesty, humility, courtesy, forbearance and brotherly love'.

Because of Neuburg's good nature, it was possible to open the temple at 10.30 pm. 'A lengthy ceremony followed, the usual rite being followed by ... vatem ... virgo ... orally' (an act of fellatio). 'The image of the Most High [the wax phallus] was thus richly adorned with due ornament.' The temple was closed at 1.05 am *die Mercurii* (Wednesday, 3 February 1914), 'the forces being completely absorbed'.

The Nineteenth Working took place during the following evening, in spite of the fact that O.S.V. had been ill all day with a feverish attack resembling influenza. However, the remedy of Jupiter, opium, which Jane Cheron had given him, brought about a miraculous recovery.

The temple opened at 11.28 pm and closed at 12.50 am *die Jovis* (Thursday), the ceremony being most magnificent. O.S.V. saw, amid the clouds of incense, the sarcophagus of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, his Egyptian incarnation; it was standing on end, east of the altar, and in a golden mist. 'At the climax it [the sarcophagus] flooded the room with white radiance. The ceremony raised Fra. O.S.V. from discomfort, sleepiness and fever to the top of his form.'

It occurred to Crowley, as he observed Neuburg the following morning, that Neuburg would make a perfect low comedian. What a good idea it would be to send him on the music-halls, and thus gain much gold!

The temple opened at 10.00 pm for the Twentieth Working and closed at 11.00 pm *die Jovis*, when the rite was performed *ut ordinatur*.

The next day, Friday, in spite of the remedy of Jupiter, Crowley's illness reasserted itself with great force. He had much fever and bronchitis and was obliged to keep to his bed. By the following Monday, he was still very ill but he was determined to continue the operation 'though with maimed rites'.

Thus the temple was opened 'mentally' for the Twenty-first Working at 9.10 pm and closed at 9.25. 'In spite of all the handicap,' wrote Crowley, 'the ceremony went exceedingly well. An excellent atmosphere was obtained, and O.S.V.'s temperature went down 4 degrees Centigrade!'

By the following morning Crowley had sufficiently recovered to get out of bed, put on his magical robes and open the temple for the Twenty-second Working with full rites. 'Fra. O.S.V.,' he observed of himself with typical humour, 'is now recovered, and is ungrateful enough to the doctor – an excellent and clever practitioner – to give greater thanks to Jupiter.'

The account of this working gives for the first time the correct order of the ceremony, because Fra. L.T., having become inspired with Jupiter during the early part of the proceedings, had raced ahead and left Crowley behind. Crowley therefore explained that after invoking Ammon-Ra (during the Building of the Temple rite), and before he had finished the hexagram ritual (for banishing malignant forces and invoking benignant ones), Fra. L.T. was already getting on with 'the mechanism of the *Accendat* and the preparations for the performance of the versicle . . .' But in spite of this, the *Haud secus* (the versicle which was coterminous with the sex act) 'was brilliant and inspired, and the result overwhelming – a glow of stupendous success.'

Crowley was well and strong again for the Twenty-third Working on 11 February. It was so effective that Brother L.T. was even more exhausted than on the previous occasion. During the course of it, he received a message for a certain A.G. (This was most probably Aimée Gouraud whom he wished to make his Scarlet Woman.) She was to go to the Holy House of Hathor and to offer

there the five jewels of the cow on her altar. Hathor is the Egyptian sky-goddess, patroness of love; she is presented as a woman bearing on her head the solar disc between cow's horns, or as a cow wearing the solar disc and two plumes. The five jewels of the sacred cow are milk, dung, urine, meat, and blood, the eating of which when mixed together is a regular ritual in Tantric Hinduism. The dung is not in its liquid state but sun-dried.

More results of *The Paris Working* were beginning to come in but Crowley did not say what they were. The implication, however, is that they were smallish sums of money, invitations to parties, promises of large sums of money, and an increase of the magical current generally.

The night before the Twenty-fourth and last Working was rather a sleepless one for Brother O.S.V. Nevertheless, he opened the temple at 6.15 pm on 12 February, and closed it at 7.00 sharp. Then, with a feeling of deep satisfaction, he sat down and recorded that *The Paris Working* had been brought to a successful conclusion. The final ceremony was calm and deep, the very aroma of earth in spring.

Afterwards, Frater L.T. performed divination by Thelema, that is to say he opened one of the Holy Books of Thelema at random and dipped his finger in. It stopped at this significant line: 'I am Thou, and the Pillar is established in the Void.'

The result of this great operation of High Magick Art was that Brother L.T. obtained the gifts of Jupiter. In other words, he received money but how much and from whom is not disclosed. Probably several hundreds of pounds came from his long-suffering parents. Furthermore, he was 'made like Jupiter in his aspect of Ammon'. In the context this is obscure: both celebrants had taken on the aspect of Jupiter. Crowley was being critical, I think. He had reason to be. His magical brother had come into money and was spending it freely but not on him or even, it seems, with him. *The Paris Working* ends, therefore, on a note of petty jealousy. 'He became,' said Crowley of Neuburg, 'Jupiter the Bestower, and had unworthy guests.'

To sum up: the Paris Working proved to Crowley, beyond any doubt, that the use of sex in invocations brought quicker and more sure results than the long-winded rituals of theurgy that he had been taught in the Golden Dawn. For the rest of his life he never reverted to them.

14 THE WIZARD IN THE WOOD

At the outbreak of world war, Crowley was in Switzerland. He quickly returned to England and made, he said, every attempt to persuade the government to employ him; but they did not want Aleister Crowley. He attributed their refusal to his sinister reputation, which for years he had been painstakingly building up. He had, it is true, some peculiar habits, that of giving women the Serpent's Kiss, for example, or of defecating on the drawing-room carpet or on the stairs of a friend's house.

'Good heavens, look at that!' exclaimed a certain Mrs Madeline B. to Isadora Duncan. The two ladies were sitting on the

terrace of a cafe in Montparnasse.

A man was passing, clad in a sky-blue knickerbocker suit, with beret to match, and a walking-stick of the identical colour.

'Oh, it's Aleister Crowley,' replied Isadora.

Crowley came over and was introduced to Mrs B. As he took

her hand, he said, 'May I give you the Serpent's Kiss?'

He did not wait for an answer, raised her wrist to his mouth and bit the flesh between two teeth which, it was said, he had had especially filed for that purpose; he drew blood and infected her.

This revolting habit is described in Crowley's novel, Moonchild.

She was fascinated; she could not rise to greet him. He came over to her, caught her throat in both his hands, bent back her head, and, taking her lips in his teeth, bit them – bit them almost through. It was a single deliberate act: instantly he released her, sat down upon the couch by her, and made some trivial remark about the weather.'

'May I give you the Serpent's Kiss?' said Crowley to Nancy Cunard, interrupting her conversation about Hitler. She thought it too rude to say no, or to ask first what it meant, so she said yes, and got bitten on the wrist for her foolishness.

The war had fulfilled one of the prophecies of *The Book of the Law*. Whilst the floods menaced the earth, the magical task of the brethren (according to an encyclical from *Baphomet* to all those within the Sanctuary of the Gnosis) was to build an Ark wherein the Sacred Phallus may be hidden – 'so that although the Tradi-

tion be destroyed in the destruction of the Brains that bear it, it shall be possible for those coming after us to recover the Lost Word'.

On 24 October 1914, with fifty pounds and his wax paper charter of Honorary Magus of the *Societas Rosieruciana in America* in his pocket, Crowley departed in the *Lusitania* for the United States. His reputation has preceded him. *The World Magazine* had published in August an account of London devil-worshippers and of their leader, Aleister Crowley.

I found myself in a large, high-ceilinged studio the atmosphere of which was coloured a deep blue by the reek of a peculiar smelling incense. In the first room stood row on row of books bound in black and marked on their backs with queer, malformed crosses wrought in silver. The second room was fitted up with divans and literally carpeted with multitudes of cushions tossed here and yon. In the third and largest room stood a tall, perpendicular canopy under which the high priest sat during the celebration of black mass. Directly in front of it, on a floor tesselated and mosaiced with parti-colored patterns and marked with cabbalistic signs, stood the altar, a black pedestal on top of which was affixed a golden circle. Across the latter lay a golden serpent, as if arrested in the act of crawling. I heard someone behind a curtain playing a weird Chinese-like air on some sort of stringed instrument.

The feel of the whole place was decidedly uncanny. . . . One by one the worshippers entered. They were mostly women of aristocratic type. Their delicate fingers adorned with costly rings, their rustling silks, the indefinable elegance of their carriage attested their station in life. It was whispered to me that not a few people of noble descent belonged to the Satanists. Everybody wore a little black domino which concealed the upper part of the face, making identification impossible. Hung with black velvet curtains, the place presented a decidedly sepulchral aspect. The complexions of the women seemed as white as wax. There was a fitful light furnished by a single candlestick having seven branches. Suddenly this went out and the place was filled with subterranean noises like the sound of a violent wind moving among innumerable leaves. Then came the slow, monotonous chant of the high priest: 'There is no good. Evil is good. Blessed be the Principle of Evil. All hail, Prince of the World, to whom even God Himself has given dominion." A sound as of evil bleating filled the pauses of these blasphemous utterances . . .

These séances took place in Crowley's studio in Fulham Road. The poet Trevor Blakemore told me that he had asked Crowley to take him there so that he could meet the mysterious Mother of Heaven, Leila Waddell, but Crowley refused, saying that that was where he 'caught the old cats'.

The price of admission was high, but there was a type of woman willing to pay. Poverty or ambition, which makes men commit all manner of things, had turned Crowley into an adventurer and, it was said, blackmailer.

'Men and women,' wrote Harry Kemp, the author of the article in *The World Magazine* 'danced about, leaping and swaying to the whining of infernal and discordant music. They sang obscene words set to hymn tunes and gibbered unintelligible jargon. Women tore their bodices; some partially disrobed. One fair worshipper, seizing upon the high priest's dagger, wounded herself in the breasts. At this all seemed to go madder than ever . . .'

Another and more temperate, account of these performances at Crowley's Fulham Road studio is to be found in Elliott O'Donnell's *Rooms of Mystery*, 1931.

On 13 December 1914, *The World Magazine* introduced Crowley again to its readers. 'Aleister Crowley, who recently arrived in New York, is the strangest man I ever met. He is a man about whom men quarrel. Intensely magnetic, he attracts people or repels them with equal violence. His personality seems to breed rumors. Everywhere they follow him.'

In this inferview, Crowley dealt with Kemp's account of his London orgies. 'Kemp honestly believes he was present at the things he describes, but he wasn't. I merely made him dream a scene of black magic, and he thought it was actually happening and that I was participating. I don't practise black magic.'

Crowley's appearance was so extraordinary that he was bound to attract attention; and behind his appearance was a personality rather remote – the Wanderer of the Waste

At times, [said the reporter of *The World Magazine*] I have seen him look seventy, and at times barely twenty-five. His looks change seemingly at will. Now he is a priest-like old man; now apparently a somewhat effeminate youth with soft, plump hands and heavy, womanish face. The hands alone do not change, but they are very wonderful, and adorned with weird

rings. On the thumb Crowley wears a heavy gold band with a blood-red cross on a white ground. On one of his fingers is a jewelled serpent, and next to it is a symbolic circle with large studded signet containing the mystic metals. Attached to the end of his watch chain and carried in the vest pocket is the white double-headed sword-bearing eagle, the last and highest degree of the Ancient and Accepted Rite of Scottish Masonry. But the most striking thing about Crowley's appearance is the horn-like lock of hair that stands erect on his broad, high forehead. Sometimes he parts it in two and then it looks for all the world like a symbol of satanism.

The 'horn-like lock of hair' was the sign of the Phallus, and the two locks, the horns of Pan, the god of lust, so dear to Crowley's heart. He was staying at 40 West 36th Street, New York, and had Christmas dinner with John Quinn. There were two other guests, the artist, John Butler Yeats, father of W. B. Yeats, and the journalist, Frederic James Gregg; they smoked Quinn's big cigars and drank whisky, Rhine wine, and Chartreuse.

40 West 36th Street was now the headquarters of the O.T.O. There was at least one other member of the Order on the American continent: the youthful Neophyte, Achad, meaning One, or Unity, otherwise known as Charles Stansfeld Jones, an accountant, of Vancouver (not to be confused with George Cecil Jones, chemist).

The ritual enclosed by you [wrote Baphomet to Achad in Vancouverl is very fine. . . . I hope you will arrange to repeat this all the time, say every new or full moon so as to build up a regular force. You should also have a solar ritual to balance it, to be done each time the Sun enters a new sign, with special festivity at the Equinoxes and Solstices. In this way you can establish a regular cult; and if you do them in a truly magical manner, you create a vortex of force which will suck in all the people you want. The time is just ripe for a natural religion. People like rites and ceremonies, and they are tired of hypothetical gods. Insist on the real benefits of the Sun, the Mother-Force, the Father-Force and so on; and show that by celebrating these benefits worthily the worshippers unite themselves more fully with the current of life. Let the religion be Joy, with but a worthy and dignified sorrow in death itself; and treat death as an ordeal, an initiation. Do not gloss over facts, but transmute them in the Athanor [the alchemist's furnace] of your

THE WIZARD IN THE WOOD

ecstasy. In short be the founder of a new and greater Pagan cult in the beautiful land which you have made your home. As you go on you can add new festivals of corn and wine, and all things useful and noble and inspiring.

From Crowley's diary, *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, we know with whom he was practising his sexual magic, whether with a 'respectable married woman' or a prostitute, the odd chorus girl or by himself (VIII°), with a sister of the Order, with his Scarlet Woman, or with an aspirant to Scarlet Womanhood. And for what object, such as furthering his knowledge of the mysteries of the IX°; for wisdom; for sex-force and attraction; for 'red gold' (money); for something more exalted or less exalted. He had no problems to solve and certainly no ambitions, as the word is generally understood. The sexual details are in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, usually abbreviated.

Upon his arrival in New York, he naturally continued (as he put it) his researches in the IX°, and his diary contains the names of quite a few prostitutes for that purpose.

Lea Dewey. Dutch prostitute, Aquarius rising. Big and tall but not fat; the muscular wolf-type.

Margaret Pitcher. A young, pretty stupid, wide-mouthed, flat-faced, slim-bodied harlot. Fair hair. Fine fat juicy Yoni.

Viola. Hideous taurine doped prostitute.

Helen Marshall. Irish-American prostitute. Taurus rising, Beautiful lazy type. Not actually passionate or perverse. A cheerful comfortable girl.

Anna Gray, prostitute. Big fat negress, very passionate.

And so on. Unfortunately he did not, like the author of My Secret Life, record their conversation. They did not know that Crowley was using them as Magical Assistants.

He was at this period also sodomised by two strangers in a Turkish bath in New York, and he practised fellatio with a third, all on the same night; they were acts for a magical purpose for he rarely indulged in sex for the mere pleasure of it.

This was his third visit to America; because of war in Europe he was going to stay for some time. He was not particularly happy; he did not fit in with the American way of life and he was short of money. 'I seem to have no creative power, or inspiration,' he wrote in his diary at the beginning of 1915; the following day he added, 'I have just done a IX° to become a great orator, invoked Tahuti, and delivered a sermon to the inhabitants of the

Ten Thousand Worlds on the text "Oh my God! I swim in thine heart as a trout in a mountain torrent."

In his VIII° acts (sexual magic of the solitary kind) during his first few months in America, the object of the operation was usually that of making Babalon, the Scarlet Woman, appear in the flesh, to be his constant companion, and to perform with him this Royal Art in equal seriousness. (The diary for this period is called *Rex de Arte Regia*, 'The King on the Royal Art'. Crowley is, of course, this King, and the Royal Art is that of sexual magic.)

One day early in 1915. Crowley was on top of an omnibus going up Fifth Avenue, reading some newspaper cutting about himself which a London press agency had sent him. A man sitting behind him, who guessed he was an Englishman, tapped him on the shoulder and fired the challenging question: 'Do you favour a square deal for Germany and Austria?'

This was a good enough introduction. Crowley was in favour of a fair deal for everyone. They chatted about the war, and as Crowley expressed sentiments not unfavourable to the Central Powers, the stranger, who jumped up to go when the bus reached 37th Street, gave Crowley his card and invited him to call on him.

Mr O'Brien, for that was the stranger's name, was not in when Crowley came to see him a few days later. Instead, another man came forward 'with extended hands, bulging eyes, and the kind of mouth which seems to have been an unfortunate afterthought'. This was George Sylvester Viereck, the German-American poet and writer of rather clever books. If his eyes were bulging, it was with surprise at seeing Aleister Crowley, to whom he had been introduced by the editor of *The English Review*, Austin Harrison, in London during 1911.

The face of Viereck was vaguely familiar to Crowley. Viereck reminded him of their last meeting. And meanwhile Viereck had abandoned poetry for propaganda, and Crowley, now in exile, was looking for a job; he had come to the only place that would give him one – the headquarters of the German Propaganda in America.

Thirty-five years later, Viereck gave me his version of the meeting:

Crowley talked to me and turned on all the charm of which he was capable. He was opposed to British imperialism and so expressed himself. I believe he said he was completely or partly Irish. There were many distinguished Irishmen who refused to

231

go along with Great Britain, including Sir Roger Casement. There were also some Englishmen who as a matter of high principle opposed the war. I could not ordinarily trust a traitor or a crank, but I remembered that several members of the cabinet resigned as a protest against the secret pledges given by Sir Edward Grey to France. Consequently, it seemed highly likely that Crowley was sincere.

Crowley was, of course, both a traitor and a 'crank', and Viereck knew it; that was why he employed him.

A few months later Crowley added colour to the belief that he was an Irishman by the following stunt. He collected a girl with a violin – Leila Waddell, who had followed him to America and with whom he was occasionally performing IX° magic – and 'about four other debauched persons', and went out in a motorboat before dawn on 3 July 1915 to the foot of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour and there made this brief speech:

I have not asked any great human audience to listen to these words; I had rather address them to the unconquerable ocean that surrounds the world, and to the free four winds of heaven. Facing the sunrise. I lift up my hands and my soul herewith to this giant figure of liberty, the ethical counterpart of the light, life and love¹ which are our spiritual heritage. In this symbolical and most awful act of religion, I invoke the one true God of whom the Sun Himself is but a shadow that He may strengthen me in heart and hand to uphold that freedom for the land of my sires, which I am come hither to proclaim.

In this dark moment before the father orb of our system kindles with his kiss the sea, I swear the great oath of the Revolution.

I tear with my hands this token of slavery, this safe-conduct from the enslaver of my people . . .

At this point, Crowley tore up an envelope which was supposed to contain his British passport but which contained nothing of the sort, for he needed it to return to Britain when he was fed up with America.

I renounce for ever all allegiance to every alien tyrant; I swear to fight to the last drop of my blood to liberate the men and

1 'The DEACON. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I proclaim the Law of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty in the name of IAO.' Crowley's 'Gnostic Mass,' published as Liber XV (The Equinox, Detroit, 1919).

women of Ireland; and I call upon the free people of this country, on whose hospitable shores I stand in exile, to give me countenance and assistance in breaking those bonds which they broke for themselves one hundred and thirty eight years ago.

I proclaim the Irish Republic. I unfurl the Irish flag. *Erin go Bragh*. God save Ireland.

One of the 'debauched persons' then waved the Irish flag and Leila played with her fiddle the 'Wearing of the Green'.

This futile, schoolboy escapade on the part of a man who had never set foot on Irish soil was reported in the *New York Times*; and Crowley spread it further by letters to various editors.

The upshot of Crowley's meeting with Viereck was that he was invited to write for *The Fatherland* (subtitled *Fair Play for Germany and Austria-Hungary*), which Viereck edited.

We now enter an aspect of Crowley's mind which is difficult to understand if we wish to get away from the idea that he was a plain and simple traitor. Without hesitation or any search of his heart, he began to publish in *The Fatherland* the crudest propaganda against Great Britain and in praise of Germany. And when *The International*, another publication run by the same firm, was turned over to him to edit for a weekly wage of twenty dollars, he filled it up with anti-British balderdash and *magick*, which was really his sole interest, under the names of Aleister Crowley, Baphomet, The Master Therion (his Magus motto in the A.: A.:) Lord Boleskine, Edward Kelley, Adam d'As, Cor Scorpionis, and so on, and published notices of his own works on the advertisement pages in spaces which had not been filled.

The resentment flowed forth but without much conviction, as if he did not care whom he was abusing and could, with little persuasion, turn it against someone else. The asides in his articles of hate show that Crowley was still a schoolboy.

For some reason or other in their last Zeppelin raid on London the Germans appear to have decided to make the damage as widespread as possible, instead of concentrating it in one quarter. A house close to my lawyer's office in Chancery Lane was entirely destroyed. . . . A great deal of damage was done at Croydon, especially at its suburb Addiscombe, where my aunt lives. Unfortunately her house was not hit. Count Zeppelin is respectfully requested to try again. The exact address is Eton Lodge, Outram Road.

Why did Crowley scribble so furiously for the enemy? Because

he hated Britain and wanted to see a victory for Germany? Not a bit of it. It was his method of helping the Allies. He was trying 'to wreck the German propaganda on the roof of Reductio ad Absurdum'. Through his advocacy of unrestricted German submarine warfare, for example, he indirectly brought America into the war. He should, he said, have been given the Victoria Cross.

Viereck and Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, thought otherwise. Viereck considered he was getting good propaganda value for his twenty dollars a week (Austin Harrison, the editor of the *The English Review*, had described Crowley to him as the greatest metrical poet since Swinburne); Grey was alarmed at the harm he imagined Crowley was doing in America to the Allied cause.

Crowley's own summary of these activities sounds too much like a man trying to double back on his tracks; he had supported the losing side and, with characteristic effrontery, he tried to make out that he had been doing his best for England all along. 'I decided,' he wrote, 'on a course of action, which seemed to me the only one possible in a situation which I regarded as immensely serious. I would write for *The Fatherland*. By doing so I should cut myself off temporarily from all my friends, from all sources of income; I should apparently dishonour a name which I considered it my destiny to make immortal...'

With the confidence of the insane, he urged those who did not believe him to ask 'his friend' Commodore (later Admiral Sir Guy) Gaunt, head of Naval Intelligence in America.

Crowley would have found the Admiral's reply – for I wrote to him – disconcerting.

Re the man you mention, I think you describe him exactly when you refer to him as a 'small-time traitor'. As regards his activities, I think they were largely due to a frantic desire for advertisement – he was very anxious to keep his name before the public somehow or other. I knew all about him at the time and for a short time either Grey or Balfour was very worried about him. I went over to London and had a long talk with Basil Thompson at Scotland Yard and I preached 'Let him alone, I have got a complete line on him and also *The Fatherland*'.

Gerald Kelly, who was working as a secret agent in Spain during the war, was also asked for his opinion of Crowley. He, too, advised leaving Crowley alone; the clownish friend of his youth could be only an ineffectual tool in the hands of the enemy. They had not met for some years, and what Kelly had heard of Crowley's antics seemed to him drear and shabby. Crowley's marriage with his sister Rose and his attitude towards Kelly's parents had, in the end, destroyed their friendship which had once been so keen.

Crowley was rather puzzled at finding himself a traitor and he was furious when Frank Harris, who was in America at that time, pointed it out to him. And when in the spring of 1917, the British authorities replied to his abuse in *The Fatherland* by raiding the London headquarters of the O.T.O., he was aghast. Did they really believe him to be a traitor? The Stupids have misunderstood my whole attitude and raised trouble, he wrote in his diary after hearing the news. Now I go direct to Washington to straighten this out; if I fail this time to get them to listen to sense, at least I can go to Canada, and force them to arrest me.

But he did nothing of the sort; he knew that he could not persuade anyone that he was really working for Britain by his *reductio ad absurdum* method of propaganda; and he himself did not believe it.

On 14 June 1917, he analysed his mind in general and his attitude towards the war in particular, and concluded with the view that his psyche was split into two independent halves, on one of which was written *patriot*, on the other *traitor*.

I am getting quite to the point of habitual recognition of myself as Aiwass, and it does much good. But I have seen lately the danger of having a mental machine which functions so independently of the Self, and even of the human will. E.g. all my sympathies are most profoundly with the Allies; but my brain refuses to think as sympathizers seem to do; so in argument I often seem 'pro-German'.

Let us recount earlier adventures. On 6 October 1915, he left New York for a trip along the West Coast; he wanted to see the San Francisco exhibition and to call Brother Achad at Vancouver. He had with him, Jane Foster, whose magical name was Hilarion; she was the Scarlet Woman that his VIII° operations had brought forth. He had met her and another woman, Helen Hollis, at a dinner party given by a journalist friend; he called

1 This incident was recounted to me by Louis Wilkinson who was present at the time. Frank Harris knew what he was talking about because he, too, was a traitor; he was also a propagandist for Germany.

Jane, 'the Cat', and Helen, 'the Snake'. 'The Cat was ideally beautiful beyond my dearest dream and her speech was starry with spirituality. The Snake glittered with the loveliness of lust,' he wrote, hardly a description of any woman, but he was always seeing people in black or white; they were either vile hags or lovely beyond his wildest dreams.

Jane was the perfect type of Scarlet Woman as described in *The Book of the Law*. 'But let her raise herself in pride! Let her follow me in my way! Let her work the work of wickedness! Let her kill her heart! Let her be loud and adulterous!' And so on. He arrived at Vancouver on 19 October and was warmly welcomed by Achad who was twenty-nine years of age and who had been a member of the A: A: since 1909. What magick, sexual or otherwise, they performed together, we do not know because the record has not been preserved.

In *The Book of the Law* it is written that 'one cometh after him, whence I say not, who shall discover the Key of it all'. By 'him', Crowley understood himself, and the whole passage as meaning that he would produce a son who would explain the mysteries in *Liber Legis* which still remained to be explained. It so happened that he had been thinking of this passage in *The Book of the Law* when he began to perform acts of sexual magic (IX°) with Hilarion; in fact, the operations had as their object the begetting of this very son.

In an epistle to Brother Achad (from *Baphomet*, Palace Hotel, San Francisco. \odot in \mathfrak{m} , \mathfrak{p} in \mathfrak{m} , Crowley threw back the hood and gave his honest opinion of that great mystery, the American Woman.

DISCOURSE ON WOMAN

by the Philosopher Kwaw

Every woman has a sensitive spot. Do not think to puzzle Sir Almroth Wright¹ by asking him to point out its locality. He knows about it all, he knows, he KNOWS. The great American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, has, however, indicated this truth but vaguely, and emphasized it but inadequately. American men are consequently ignorant or careless of the same, and a great cry has therefore gone up from American women that their husbands and lovers are useless. In order to obtain the satisfaction of being excluded from this category, it

1 The celebrated British physician.

is only necessary to find this spot, and to caress it continuously, persistently, watchfully, tirelessly, with the various instruments which bountiful Nature and a benevolent God have provided expressly for this purpose. Your sole duty and pleasure with regard to yourself is delay. Pay no attention to petitions for mercy, and firmly but gently repress any struggles. There are various holds which enable one to do this with ease. Remember above all that if the victim is capable of moving a limb for hours afterwards you will be despised. However, a certain amount of tact is necessary. The slightest appearance of brutality is always to be avoided unless the woman is of the type that desires it, a type common enough; but even in this case it must be assumed and not real . . .

From San Francisco, he went to Point Loma in the hope of having a chat with Katherine Tingley, the head of the Theosophical Society in America; he wanted to propose an alliance between their two organisations, but she declined to see him. He was very impolite about those members of the Society whom he did see when he came to record the disappointing event in his *Confessions*.

While on the way to New Orleans, he discarded the Cat, whose beauty was beyond his dearest dream and whose speech was starry with spirituality, having been enlightened meanwhile about her falseness, and 'therefore it became my duty to slay her'. The desolation in his heart was 'unspeakably dreadful' but there was still the Snake and soon other women appear or reappear to console him – Doris Gomez, Gerda Maria von Kothek (the Owl), including, of course the odd and hideous prostitute. He ascribed Hilarion's failure in the Work to 'respectability'. In other words she could not stand Aleister Crowley whose favourite method of congress with women was buggery (per vas nefandum, 'by the unmentionable vessel').

Exactly nine months after Crowley's acts of sexual magic with Hilarion, that is to say at the summer solstice of 1916, Brother Achad stood before the altar in his temple in Vancouver and took the solemn oath of a Master of the Temple; he had had a Mystical Experience in which the Secret Chiefs had beckoned him to assume this high grade. And during the following month he announced the great news to Crowley in a telegram: he had crossed the Abyss and been 'born' on the other side – the side of the Secret Chiefs – and he was now, like his teacher, the Beast, a

Master of the Temple. This is staggering progress because, in 1913, Brother Achad had been only a Neophyte of the A: A:

Crowley was immediately thrown by this news into a state of excitement and confusion; he saw the relevance of this event to himself. It was, he said, unprecedented in the whole history of Magick. Achad had been ignorant of his, Crowley's, autumnal operations with Hilarion (seven in all) and with Helen Westley ('three operations at the beginning and end of catamenia'), which operations he described as 'particularly good', but he, Achad, had 'understood perfectly at the time what he was doing; that he was being born as "The Child" predicted in *The Book of the Law*. Through his sexual operations with Hilarion, Crowley and the Cat had given birth to a metaphysical or magical child as predicted in *Liber Legis*. It now only remained for Brother Achad to find the Key to *The Book of the Law* and unlock the mysteries.

Crowley was one leap ahead of Achad, for he had meanwhile attained the Grade of Magus $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$, an initiation (with the help of the Cat, the Snake, the Owl, and the Monkey, whom he called officers of this great birth) which had progressed through several months until its culmination on 12 October 1915; it happened to be his fortieth birthday.

Ratification of the Grade occurred during the summer of the following year, 1916. He was on a Great Magical Retirement near Bristol in New Hampshire. He was meditating in his cottage in the woods . . .

And there came unto him a sign from Heaven that the Secret Chiefs wished him to assume formally his exalted Grade of Magus $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$ in the Brotherhood of the A.A... He described the nature of the sign in a letter to Brother Achad.

I am indeed cheerful. An hour ago I was in the depths of despair, wondering if I was any good at anything any more, etc. Then a globe of fire struck within a few inches of my feet, one spark leaping to the middle finger of my left hand – a particularly sacred finger by the way. I had actually been struck by lightning before on a mountain in Cumberland. At the beginning of the storm, a father, mother and child had taken shelter under my roof – which rather completes the omen. As far as I can see no damage was done to the house. Anyhow, this is a clear message that I'm going through with this initiation . . .

We know, more or less, the nature of the rite because Crowley afterwards wrote down the main structure of it. To prepare the

temple of the New Aeon of Horus, the rubbish of its ruined predecessor must be thoroughly cleared away. The magical operation was therefore to banish the 'Dying God'.

> Σταυρὸς Βατράχου He had crucified a toad In the basilisk abode, Muttering the Runes averse Mad with many a mocking curse,

(

In this Ritual the Chief Officer representeth a Snake, because of Mercury. (The proper food of snakes is frogs.) The Mystery of Conception is the catching of the frog in silence, and the affirmation of the Will to perform this ceremony.

I

The frog being caught it is kept all night in an ark or chest; as it is written, 'Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's Womb'. Presently the frog will begin to leap therein, and this is an omen of good success. Dawn being come, thou shalt approach the chest with an offering of gold, and if available of frankincense and of myrrh. Thou shalt then release the frog from the chest with many acts of homage and place it in apparent liberty. He may, for example, be placed on a quilt of many colours, and covered with a net.

TT

Now take a vessel of water and approach the frog, saying: In the Name of the Father + and of the Son + and of the Holy Ghost (here sprinkle water on its head) I baptize thee, O creature of frogs, with water, by the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

III

During the day thou shalt approach the frog whenever convenient, and speak words of worship. And thou shalt ask it to perform such miracles as thou desirest to be done; and they shall be done according to Thy Will. Also thou shalt promise to the frog an elevation fitting for him; and all this while thou shalt be secretly carving a cross whereon to crucify him.

V

Night being fallen, thou shalt arrest the frog, and accuse him of blasphemy, sedition and so forth, in these words:

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Lo, Jesus of Nazareth, how thou art taken in my snare. All my life long thou hast plagued me and affronted me. In thy name – with all other free souls in Christendom – I have been tortured in my boyhood; all delights have been forbidden unto me; all that I had has been taken from me, and that which is owed to me they pay not – in thy name. Now, at last, I have thee; the Slave-God is in the power of the Lord of Freedom. Thine hour is come; as I blot thee out from this earth, so surely shall the eclipse pass; and Light, Life, Love and Liberty be once more the Law of Earth. Give thou place to me, O, Jesus; thine aeon is passed; the Age of Horus is arisen by the Magick of the Master the Beast that is Man; and his number is six hundred and three score and six. Love is the law, love under will.

[A pause.]

I, Τὸ Μέγα Θηριον, therefore condemn thee, Jesus the slavegod, to be mocked and spat upon and scourged and then crucified.

V

This sentence is then executed. After the mocking upon the Cross, say thus: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I, the Great Beast, slaying thee, Jesus of Nazareth, the slave-god, under the form of this creature of frogs, do bless this creature in the name of the + Father and of the + Son and of the + Holy Ghost. And I assume unto myself and take into my service the elemental spirit of this frog, to be about me as a lying spirit, to go forth upon the earth as a guardian to me in my Work for Man; that men may speak of my piety and of my gentleness and of all virtues and bring to me love and service and all material things soever where I may stand in need. And this shall be its reward, to stand beside me and hear the truth that I utter, the falsehood whereof shall deceive men. Love is the law, love under will.

Then shalt thou stab the frog to the heart with the Dagger of Art, saying: Into my hands I receive thy spirit.

VI

Presently thou shalt take down the frog from the cross and divide it into two parts; the legs shalt thou cook and eat as a sacrament to confirm thy compact with the frog; and the rest shalt thou burn utterly with fire, to consume finally the aeon of the accursed one. So mote it be!

Thus Crowley ascended to the Grade of Magus $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$ in the Great White Brotherhood of Light (the A.A.), and took as his magical motto To Méya $\Theta \eta \rho \iota o \nu$, the Great Beast or, as he expressed it on occasions of public utterance, the Master Therion.

'The result,' he wrote, 'was immediately apparent. A girl of the village, three miles away, asked me to employ her as my secretary. I had no intention of doing any literary work; but as soon as I set eyes on her I recognized that she had been sent for a purpose, for she exactly resembled the aforesaid toad.'

It is surprising that Crowley did not recoil from the childishness of this ritual. Having thrown down Christ (in the form of a frog), he then sets himself up in Christ's place, that was the precise meaning of the ceremony, his aim since the time he decided that he was the Beast of *Revelation*. Some people are just weak and do nothing about it, but Crowley made a religion out of his weakness. I, the Great Beast . . .

One item in Crowley's diary for the American period (6 May 1917), arises above the clouds of incense. 'Had news of my mother's death. Two nights before news had dreamed that she was dead, with a feeling of extreme distress. The same happened two nights before I had news of my father's death. I had often dreamed my mother had died, but never with that helpless, lonely feeling.'

He took up painting. His newspaper advertisement for models is characteristic.

WANTED

DWARFS, Hunchbacks, Tattooed Women, Harrison Fisher Girls, Freaks of All Sorts, Coloured Women, only if exceptionally ugly or deformed, to pose for artist. Apply by letter with a photograph.

On 15 April 1916, he recorded an act of magical sex with Alice Ethel Coomaraswamy, the Yorkshire-born wife of the art historian, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (also spelt Koomaraswamy); her photograph in Indian dress appears in the diary (Rex de Arte Regia). So great was the orgasm that it drowned all memory of the object of the work, but it produced a very tangible object for the 'Assistant', for she conceived. Crowley gave her the nickname of 'the Monkey' and 'the Monkey Officer'. He says some unpleasant things about her in his Confessions and even calls her husband, Ananda, a murderer. Three months later while he was on a Great Magical Retirement near Bristol (during which Retirement he performed the Toad Ritual), he heard that she had miscarried.

In the autumn of 1916, he summarised his views on sex education in a letter to Brother Achad. I suspect it is not meant to be taken seriously.

I think that sexual knowledge should be based broadly on intercourse with, say, 1,000 women chosen from, say, 80 to 100 races and sub-races. Other branches of the study are easily mastered, except Sapphism, which is hard even to witness, as you have to be on very intimate terms with one of the girls, and if both are real exclusive Sapphists, you can't be, unless you can work your Point of View as an artist or student of sex. I had an awful blow last November when a girl asked me, 'Have you ever been pricked with needles in the dark?' and I had not. The red brand of shame sears my forehead to this hour.

During 1917, he had many sexual *opera* with a Pennsylvanian Dutch girl, Anna Katherine Miller. They lived together in a furnished apartment in a corner house on Central Park West, near its northern limit at 110 Street. 'We rested and rejoiced in the spirit,' he wrote. The sex magical method he used with her was invariably *per vas nefandum*, a perversion which she, too, may have liked, or tolerated for the sake of the Great Work. But after a few months of being the Whore of the Stars, she took (according to Crowley) 'to orgies of solitary drunkenness', and they parted. Crowley's nickname for her was 'the Dog'. During the time they were together, he had, of course, been attending to his devotions with other women.

The vacuum left by the Dog was immediately filled by the Camel, the nickname of Roddie Minor, a married woman living apart from her husband.

She was physically a magnificent animal, with a man's brain well stocked with general knowledge and a special comprehension of chemistry and pharmacy. . . . I have said that she had a man's brain, but despite every effort, there was still one dark corner in which her femininity had taken refuge and defied her to expel it. . . . I treated her as an equal in all respects, and for some months everything went as smoothly as if she had been really a man. But that beleaguered section of her brain sent out spies under cover of night. . . . The idea was born and grew that she was essentially my inferior. She began to feel my personality as an obsession. She began to dread being dominated, though perfectly well aware that I wished nothing less, that her freedom was necessary to my enjoyment of her. But she failed to rid herself of this hallucination, and when I decided to make a Great Magical Retirement on the Hudson, in a canoe, in the summer of 1918, we agreed to part. 1

On her first appearance in The Magical Record, 1 October 1917, she is described simply as 'Roddie Minor, Matron, Big, muscular, sensual type. Pet name Eve'. From her photograph, she was broad-shouldered and pleasant-faced. He also called her the Camel because she helped him to cross the desert (i.e. this barren period of his life) and reach an oasis. She performed at least one valuable function for him: she introduced him to the Wizard Amalantrah. It happened in this way. On 14 January 1918, while he was sitting at his desk, writing The Book of Wisdom and Folly (Liber CXI, Aleph), an extended commentary on The Book of the Law in the form of a letter from the Master Therion (Crowley) to his Magical Son, Achad (Jones), and the Camel was squatting on a mattress on the floor of their New York apartment and smoking opium, he was suddenly and forcibly reminded of her presence by her mentioning an egg in the course of an account of the vision she was having. Crowley who had been using her sexually as he had used the Dog, said he was not in the least interested in her visions, but the reference to the egg made him think that perhaps Ab-ul-Diz was trying to get in touch with him again; for Ab-ul-Diz's final instruction to him and Sister Virakam was that they should go to a desert and look for an egg under a palm tree. Unfortunately the break-up of that relationship had prevented Crowley from setting off for North Africa in search of this egg, and meanwhile he had forgotten about the Wizard Ab-ul-Diz.

The Wizard Amalantrah called Roddie Minor, Ahitha, and sometimes Achitha.

Here is Roddie's first vision from her magical record:

While with The Lady of Our Dreams [opium], I had a vision of myself as a spreading candlestick with thirteen candles. Over each flame was the opening of a tube which could hold water as a fountain. These tubes met the flame in a throbbing vibration which became almost excruciating; then, suddenly, the part of the candlestick above the stem broke off and became a crown. The crown floated in the air, tilted at a slight angle; and a circle, which was a halo, came down from heaven and dropped into the crown. In the center a wand came, and then it all hovered above the candlestick with a veil round it. The veil in some ways appeared as rays of light.

For a long while Crowley talked to her 'about number 93 [Thelema] and how adepts were tested when they brought messages, and how messages had been sent to him through the Scarlet Woman.' Crowley was thinking of the Scarlet Woman, Virakam.

Roddie's diary continues: 'I had another vision of myself as thirteen naked women, lying in a row, all being caressed at once. When I told this to Therion, he suggested that I should see if I could get any messages through visions or otherwise.'

Crowley was an experienced traveller on these planes and he knew how to interrogate the entities – wizards, kings, queens, boys, demons, monsters – that appeared, to find out if they were friendly or hostile, and if hostile he knew how to banish them immediately.

I began by asking for a vision containing a message. I first heard gurgling water and saw a dark farmhouse amid trees and green fields. The house and other things disappeared and a dark yoni appeared just where the house had stood. I then asked 'Where will a message come from?' Immediately soldiers with guns appeared, lounging around the place, and a king on a throne where the house had stood. I asked again for a message and saw an egg in which were many tiny convolutions of some flesh-like substance. The egg was placed in a frame. Around it were clouds, trees, mountains and water, called 'four elements'. A camel appeared in front of the whole picture. I next tried to find out who the king was. He looked more like Professor Shotwell than anyone else. That is, he was 'simple, democratic', very learned and fine. He was certainly not a king belonging to any kingdom but a king of men. I asked his name, and the

word *Ham* appeared between the egg in the frame and the soldiers around the king.

The king went to one side and a wizard linked his arms in the king's as they disappeared. The wizard looked at me significantly as if he'd given me a wink. He was an old man with a grey beard, dressed in a long, black gown. He was infinitely wise. They went to a cave in the base of a low mountain on some shore. A spring of sparkling cool water bubbled up near the mouth of the cave. I went into the cave and saw them doing something mysterious with a revolver. The wizard had the revolver. What they were going to do was a joke of some kind but the wizard looked grim. At Therion's suggestion, I went up to them and said, 'I am Eve'. This seemed to stop everything, They both disappeared, the cave too. Very soon I saw the king sitting in a niche covered with a canopy, cut in the side of the mountain. In quite another place the wizard was sitting under a tree fanning himself. At Therion's suggestion, I went up to him and asked his name. I became very frightened and had the same sensation as when I spoke to him in the cave; it was a kind of shyness and awe. He only smiled at me and would not speak. It seemed that I did not know enough for him to speak with me. For him to say anything to me, I should have to build a fire of sticks, which he showed me how to do. There was a baby connected in some way with my act of building the fire; it was like a ritual. Then a most beautiful lion was standing by the fire. The wizard was still holding one or two sticks. He smiled and said, 'Child'. I then saw a most beautiful naked boy of five or six years old, dancing and playing in the woods in front of us. Therion asked how he would look dressed, and when I saw him in conventional clothes, he looked very uncomfortable and repressed, as if he should be wearing a tiger skin. On one side, near the place where I had made the fire, was a large turtle, standing up like a penguin.

The wizard was very happy and satisfied. He sat down and reached out his hand to me, and had me sit beside him. As we watched the boy, he put his left arm round me tenderly and placed my head on the left side of his chest.

He said, 'It's all in the egg'.

So ends the first vision in which the Wizard Amalantrah appears. Crowley, it seems, was interested in it from the start, and not, as he says in *The Confessions*, from the moment the egg was mentioned. Like a scientist on earth instructing a cosmonaut on

the moon, he advised and instructed Eve what to do. But in spite of his knowledge of symbolism, and his familiarity with the works of Freud, and with Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* (which he had been studying during the previous year or two), he made no attempt to interpret this material in terms of consciousness. To him, the characters and incidents of mescal visions were more real than anything that reality, or the ego, could provide; he would not have been surprised to meet Ab-ul-Diz or Amalantrah strolling up Fifth Avenue; the wizard would have descended on to the plane of illusion (Fifth Avenue), that is all.

On Sunday, 20 January, at three o'clock in the morning, the vision continued, with the assistance of the Lady of Our Dreams, opium.

'I asked the wizard for a message,' said Ahitha. 'A large red A appeared and an eagle came through it, and flew away, close to the ground, through the woods, and over some meadows. A red Indian came running like the wind. It was very beautiful as a picture.'

An hour later, Crowley joined her.

Therion and I entered the Astral Plane. I was draped in a diaphanous virile yellow green, he in a brilliant red with gold braid. In one hand he held a sceptre: there was a ring on the other hand. We went through the ceiling and up about 900 feet in the air, and looked up and saw an eve in the clouds. We went to the place of the eye and saw a building upon something like a platform. There were many doors with signs of various sorts on them, such as the swastika etc. We went to a distant door at the end of a corridor. A dwarf stood to the right of it and a girl to the left. I asked the dwarf where the door led to. He did not answer but showed me a column, with a blazing top. I asked the girl and she replied, 'Heaven'. Interpreted it meant where we wanted to go. I opened the door easily and saw a corridor in darkness. We passed through, and saw a light outside the end door. We went outside and looked down a few hundred feet upon a beautiful pastoral scene and some villages. We dropped down to this scene. A beautiful lady came up. She was blonde and dressed in creamy white. I asked her her name and she answered, 'Eve'. This seemed wrong. I asked her where we were to go to and she replied, 'France'. She lay upon the ground, and waved her hand, which looked like the fin of a fish. towards a village. We all went there. On the way, a man, who

looked like a Greek philosopher, walked a little behind us, as if he were a shadow. He had a staff and was in Greek costume.

When we came to the village which was called Pantruel, we saw a church in a square in which there was a cone-shaped fountain. The fountain was made of metal; water was spurting from each petal of the cone. Later the fountain spurted flames. The dwarf was now with us, and we asked him who the fountain-keeper was. The fountain opened and the king (of last week's vision) came out with some papers in his hand. One of the papers was a map of South America; the others were legal papers, deeds, etc. I asked about the message and he kept looking at the papers, but finally told us to go to the wizard. We went down by the stream and across into the woods where the wizard and the child were. They both looked a little lonely. I asked his name and he told me Amalantrah. I asked who I was, and he said. 'Part of the Tao'. I asked for the message, and he put me off in all sorts of ways with small visions. Once he said, 'Go', which I took to mean, go to some place. Later he said 'Egypt'. He did not seem very friendly towards me and seemed worried at times.

Before the vision ended, Crowley told her to ask the wizard how to spell Baphomet. He badly wanted to know the correct spelling of this name so as to have its Cabbalistic number; he also wanted to know the meaning of the word. If the wizard who called himself Amalantrah could answer these two difficult questions, he was, beyond doubt, a real wizard.

I then [continued Eve (or Roddie Minor or Ahitha or the Camel)] asked how to spell Baphomet and a man like *The Gods of the Mountain*¹ answered my questions about this. Finally I was told B-a-f-o-m-e-t-h. I begged for more information about the message but got none. Many questions were asked about the letters of the spelling as to whether they were Hebrew, etc.

I then said good-bye, noting the boy's beautiful dark eyes, and we went away by a little path to the pool of the spring. We bathed in this and then sank through the bottom and came out directly over Manhattan. We came back to our bodies.

The meaning of the name Baphomet has puzzled scholars. The translator of Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters

Explained, 1806, says that it is derived from the Arabic word for calf, 'bahumid,' and reflects the idolatrous veneration of this animal; the 19th-century orientalist, Baron Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, says that it is from the Greek and means 'wisdom', literally, the 'baptism of wisdom'; The Oxford English Dictionary says, simply, that it is a mediaeval form of Mahomet.

In Crowley's diary, Rex de Arte Regia, the same events are recorded.

We then went up on the Astral Plane. Eve had got certain visions which struck me as significant, chiefly because of some similarity between them and the later Virakam visions. 'It's all in the egg' and so on from a wizard who is in charge of a naked boy (Horus, as I suppose).

After various minor adventures we came upon the wizard and the boy in the wood. The wizard is a Magus, always throwing visions at Eve to put her off; but she appealed to me, and he then answered. He gave his name first as Amalantre (with the T a Tau)1. I asked for an explanation of the E, and got A E, then H, then A H. This gave him as 7292. I then asked (not disclosing this number of course) for a geometrical figure of equivalent magical value. She got a 'queer triangle' (apparently equilateral with an H at two angles, nothing at the third) and then a 'solid' figure 4. These two together do of course indicate a cube of three or three squared, in a way; but the wizard getting a clearer idea of her question, broke right away and said 'The segment of an octagonal column', that is, the combination of the figure 8 and the Phallus. Now this pointed straight to Baphomet. Could this word, then, be after all the combination of the 8 and the 3, as it should be? For years I have striven to get a satisfactory spelling for Baphomet, and failed utterly. The wizard gave B A F O M E T H (Hebrew not Greek), and explained O as Vau and E as Yod. I asked whether TH was one letter or two, and got the answer 'one' - a Tau. I then asked what must be added to make the word eightfold; but even before he could answer I saw (mentally) that a final R would make its numeration 729. Then I saw the justification, Baphomet being traditionally Mithraic. It now means therefore quite simply Father Mithras. The R has been suppressed as a olind it blinded me, all right! - and because the Sun has been concealed (in Aeon of Osiris, I suppose). Looking in *Liber D*¹ for further confirmation, I find 729 = the curse of Satan! Of course! Look at the frontispiece to my *Rituel de la haute Magie*², where I have figured the Devil of the Tarot as Baphomet. This is a great and wonderful Arcanum, and I doubt not will lead to many further mysteries of the most holy Kingdom.

Crowley's workings with the Camel certainly led to many further mysteries. Throughout the spring, and during part of the summer, and perhaps later (the manuscript of *The Amalantrah Working* is not complete), the Wizard Amalantrah, who is described as having a 'very Scotch-like face, resembling the man in *Simon Iff* who was tortured and who tortured his wife', was a reality in Crowley's life, and was consulted regularly every week.

The work began with the sex rite, an operation for invoking the required forces. Its object on one occasion was 'to improve communications with Amalantrah – Blessed be he'. As Eve could not be brought into a visionary state by means of the sex rite alone, she took a drug – opium, anhalonium, or hashish.

Crowley carefully recorded her description of the vision, and when the wizard appeared on the scene, he asked him (through Eve) a variety of questions on subjects which interested him. The answers were provided by the pictures which immediately followed.

q: What is the work for week-end? First, general work. Then, work of the Holy Ghost?⁴

A: I see a curious bird, pure white, standing in water.

Again:

Q: How is the temple, is it in good shape? (i.e. the temple in which the wizard was sitting.)

A: I see a Quaker woman. Wizard seems in a funny mood.

1 Crowley's Cabbalistic dictionary, published in number VIII of *The Equinox*.

2 Eliphas Lévi wrote *Dogme et Rituel de la haute Magie*, but as Lévi was only Crowley in his previous incarnation, Crowley claims the book as his.

3 An unpublished collection of occult detective stories which Crowley wrote during 1917.

4 Not the Third Person of the Christian Trinity but specific Magical Workings as opposed to general work.

¹ The Hebrew letter.

² The Cabbalistic number of Amalantrah.

Sometimes a number or a Hebrew letter would appear in answer to a question. This presented no difficulty, for Crowley had compiled a Cabbalistic dictionary, *Sephir Sephiroth* or *Liber D*, in which every number up to a thousand has one or more meanings. (According to the Cabbala, each Hebrew letter stands for a number; when several letters appeared in reply to a question, their numbers were added together.)

A number in Roman figures (if it was no more than twenty-two) signified one of the trumps in the tarot pack, the meaning of which, according to Crowley and the teaching in the Golden Dawn, was taken from one of the twenty-two paths of the Tree of Life.

The appearance of a planetary or zodiacal sign was interpreted according to the usual attribution of the sign.

Six sticks or short lines, broken or whole, one above the other, would also sometimes appear in answer to a question. In this case, Amalantrah was answering through one of the sixty-four hexagrams of the *Yi King* (or *I Ching*). The wizard, in fact, replied only through one or other of the occult systems with which Crowley was familiar.

Questions were asked verbally. Sometimes only the first letter of each word was spoken:

Q: S.I.g.m.w.f.? (Shall I get my work filmed?)

A: I see a hole in the subway . . . a trap door, white furry animals like balls are moving about rapidly. ('This means the struggle to break away the interferences,' commented Crowley.)

"'Yes, that is the way,' said Eye in reply.

Q. H.s.w.c.t.f.s? (How soon will come the first success?)

A: When the snow melts.

Occasionally only the last letter of each word was spoken.

Q: s.a.t.f.e.r.r.a.e.n.e.? (Is Achitha part of Roddie Minor or a separate human intelligence?)

Finally, questions were asked 'mentally', that is, without speech.

Crowley presents Roddie as if she is only a reflection of his desires, but her own diary reveals a little of her thoughts. 'I see all the usual ones at the wizard's woodland place,' she writes.

They all look sad or at least very quiet and concerned. I go up to the wizard and ask him if he has anything to say. He sits down on some steps and motions me to sit at his feet. He spreads out his hands, palms downwards, and begins, 'Once upon a time there was a man and a girl'. I recognize that this is a story about myself, and instantly stop the picture, for I do not want personal things here. The ego must be crushed.¹

(The truth is that I have been very unsettled and unhappy about Therion's way of interfering with me in my manners towards him. I have been trying to settle on the best plan to get along and have reached a point where I am trying to forget it all – in other words, to suppress what I feel is really right.)

I turn and tell Therion the part of the vision about my ego appearing, and he insists that I must suppress the ego. Later, as we talk, Therion attacks me again for having caressed him in the night. I had done so in order to forget the differences of our points of view. His remarks take my breath away, for he seems to be far from understanding the whole underlying truth. I go back to the wizard, intending to ask him what to do. When I see the wizard, he is convulsed with laughter; he says to me, 'You have burned your fingers again; you must let Therion alone. The only way out for you is *not to care*.' I see a distinct flash of dazzling light which tells me that this is true.

Feb. 12.

With Mrs Elsa Lincke, After dinner,

Mrs Lincke or Sister Bazedon had joined them; earlier she had sent Crowley ten dollars, perhaps for some of his books. Her number was 444, which is the number of the Lion of the Temple.

I [Achitha] see the wizard standing up. The egg is there; the child is sitting under a tree with the roots showing where the rain has washed the soil away. The lion, the turtle and the mountain path are all there. Also the remains of the charred fire sticks where I built the first fire with the wizard. I greet the wizard. Salaam Aleikum. He lifts his left hand and drops pearls or jewels from his fingers. He says 'Amaranthus'.

o: What is the connection with Amaranthus?

A: I see a ship going south, loaded with Oriental things – teak wood. I see a gold fish washed upon the shore of the sea. Amaranthus seems to mean something holy – Holy Light.

Q: Is Therion going to do any great work at the altar we are going to set up in Egypt, whence we are going to find the egg?

1 Roddie is echoing Crowley's thoughts without really knowing what they mean. Suppress the ego, throw off the burden of consciousness, ignore limitations, do what thou wilt. A: The wizard's function with me is to get the truth. He knows the truth for me and is a guide for me. He expects me to go to Egypt to get the egg. He expects Therion to go. Therion's work is some great work.

Q: What is the magical name of Mrs Lincke?

- A: Bazedon. I see a great white cloud upon which there is a glow which turns into a ram's head. There is a frog on the ground. The wizard says, 'From the toad much is to be learned.' The toad is the symbol of Bazedon.
 - Q: When Bazedon is in danger, is she to visualise the toad?
 - A: No. It is a more general symbol.
- Q: Is it expedient to start to find the egg, and when should we start?
- A: The egg is a work which must be done the Great Work. By doing the work, we get to the key.
 - Q: Is it the same vision as in the Virakam vision?
- A: The work must go on and there must be an altar, created in Egypt. I see the king.
 - q: Who is the king?
 - A: I see O.I.V.V.I.O.1 Therion is the High Priest.
 - Q: Who is the High Priestess?
- A: I see a tall, rather beautiful woman, i.e. her face has a beautiful expression. She has dark hair.
 - Q: What special work has Bazedon to do?
- A: I see the toad again. Her work is something like a mother's, shielding. There is always a golden light, giving a glow.
- Q: W.B.t.s.i.t.W? (Will Bazedon then sit in the West?) [i.e. will she stay in the United States?]
- A: I see growing grain and a fox among it. There are baskets of corn, an eagle, and an egg on the ground near the corn. The eagle watches the egg.
 - q: Who is the eagle?
- A: I see the path and something forming out of indefinite material, as in the egg of the first vision. The eagle is in the sky on the other side of the wizard.
 - Q: When are we to go to Egypt?
- A: I see two queer animals rats as big as horses drawing a chariot at a great pace. I see Therion standing, surrounded by four knights who are pressed close to his body. There is a wonder-
- 1 Omnia In Vno, Vnus In Omnibus. Everything in One, One in Everything. 'One'i s of course Brother Achad; it is one of his magical mottoes.

ful expression on his face, an expression of consecration to some great work.

- Q: W.J.t.o.b.t.r.t.t.s.t.j? (Will June twenty-one be the right time to start the journey?)
- A: I see a horse's head. The wizard holds out his hand forming a rabbit's head.
- Q: Would the wizard be pleased to take Bazedon on the Astral Plane now?

A: Yes.

In March, another name appears in the record of The Amalantrah Working: Marie Lavroff whom Crowley in The Confessions calls (without mentioning her name) a Russian aristocrat in exile; she was one of three women, 'symbolized as three scorpions of the symbolic desert which I was crossing on my mystic journey'. From her photograph, she was younger, more feminine and prettier (from a conventional point of view) than the Camel; her eves were large and slightly protruding, with a dreamy expression. Her magical name was Olun. During one of the séances with the Camel, Crowley asked: 's.e.d.r.y.o.9.d.s.k?' 'Is Marie friend or enemy to 729 [Baphomet] and his work?' The answer was 'Pan's reed', and the number thirty-four, the number of Jupiter. Crowley asked the question because he was thinking of using Sister Olun in the Great Work. It appears that he was getting rather tired of the Camel. On 10 March, he and the Camel performed together a rite of sex magic (as usual per vas nefandum) with the object, 'To know the powers of Yoni' which, in the circumstances, strikes me as faintly contradictory, if not perverse. Then the Camel took a large dose of anhalonium which Crowley called a mercurial drug. The vision was interrupted, and Crowley wrote dispassionately in the record, 'Achitha has been rolling about in agony, the God Mercury being too pure for her corrupt mind and body'.

It soon becomes clear that Crowley was trying to replace Achitha by Olun. A reference to Olun's 'sin complex' means that Crowley was not finding her an easy prey. Olun wanted, it seems, love in the old-fashioned sense, which Crowley called 'hysterical, pseudo-romantic, and technically exquisite or of the European type'. When, after 'two weeks or so of preliminaries', he gets his way with her, the act of sex-magic has as its object 'Liberty: for the three of us, each as follows; for me, to take Vampires fearlessly; for Olun, to destroy her sin-complex; for Eve to transcend iealousy.'

Crowley called Eve 'irrational', and explained that she felt obsessed by him and dreaded being dominated by his more powerful personality. However, there was no need for her to transcend her jealousy of Olun, for Olun, unable to stand Crowley any longer, suddenly fled; and when, on 26 March, Crowley asked Amalantrah (through Eve) if she would reappear, the answer was quite definitely no.

Eve, therefore, continued in the role of Crowley's seeress, and Amalantrah, who had been looking 'very sad, and older', began to cheer up. 'Wizard is smiling tonight – a quizzical smile. He

looks like a sea captain,'

There was no particular movement in the visions; they are all more or less the same; and towards the end of them, as the following extract shows, Crowley and scryer are neatly brought back to the point from where they had started.

'Wizard very serious and looks at Achitha in a contemplative mood. Seems to approve. Turtle is the most prominent thing in the temple. Child is there, too, also lion and Bazedon. Arcteon [Achad or Charles Stansfield Jones] has a very prominent place; he is a tall man who always appears in the temple.'

- o: What is the work of this week-end?
- A: Geburah.1
- Q: Geburah applied to what?
- A: The egg. The egg is resting on the points of mountain tops, very sharp. Water around, lotus flowers on it.
 - Q: Egg is symbol of some new knowledge, isn't it?
 - A: Gimel, lamed.2
 - Q: What does that mean?
 - A: I don't know.
 - Q: How are we to break open the egg?
 - A: In plain language it means Thou art to go this Way.
- Q: (That isn't plain language.) How are we to get this new knowledge?
- A: (Don't ask questions too fast.) Sow the wild oats; go into the . . . into the Mother to be born again.
 - Q: What about the Mass of the Holy Ghost?3

1 Strength or fortitude.

- $2\ The\ letters\ G$ and L in Hebrew; they add up to 33 and mean 'spring, fountain'.
- 3 Crowley's Gnostic Mass, the text of which is printed in his Magick in Theory and Practice.

A: That hasn't anything to do with it. You've shattered everything. I'll have to establish connection all over again. Going into the Mother to be born again, you get a New Life and then the Earth is covered with wonderful flowers, and bees come to the flowers to get honey to store, and the honey is stored elixir.

Some time during the summer of this year, 1918, Crowley decided to go on a Great Magical Retirement, partly to get away from Eve. He acquired a canoe and paddled along the Hudson; but his friendship and even intimacy with her continued, and during week-ends she visited him and brought him provisions at his camp on Oesopus Island, where he fell into a deep trance and obtained visions of his previous lives (see Chapter One). Then in August he found himself a new woman; she was called Madeleine George and had orange-red curls. But she was not his mistress for long.

His last night in America, before catching the boat for Europe and home (the world war being over at last) was spent in the arms of the Camel.

15 THE SCARLET WOMAN

In the early part of 1918, Crowley gave in New York a lecture on magick to a small group of curious people who listened in silence to everything he had to say and dispersed without comment when he had finished. The lecture was hardly a success, but one member of the audience, 'the only one having even a remote resemblance to the human species',¹ came to speak to him afterwards. This was Alma Hirsig, later High Priestess of Oom.²

Two months later – now the spring of 1918 – she unexpectedly called at his studio at 1 University Place, the corner of Washington Square, accompanied by her youngest sister, Leah.

'Without wasting time on words, I began to kiss her,' said Crowley.

Alma watched this remarkable performance, as much surprised by Leah's apparent enjoyment of being immediately embraced by the Master Therion as by Therion's mode of saluting a strange young woman. 'It was sheer instinct,' said Crowley.

They continued kissing with occasional interruptions, 'such as politeness required', to speak to Alma who had brought them together.

Crowley described Leah as tall and strangely thin, with luminous eyes and a wedge-shaped face, but he did not say how old she was – in fact, she was thirty-five – nor mention that, a year later, she gave birth to an illegitimate child called Hansi; the father was one Edward Carter, who disappeared.

There is another account of Leah Hirsig, whom Crowley called Alostrael, which supplies more details of her physique. It appears in Crowley's description of Astarte, one of his previous incarnations (see page 214).

Here is Crowley's account of Astarte who was 'most strangely like Alostrael':

She was a slim, lean, nervous girl with a long face, a Roman nose, rather full lips, very strong from constant exercise, a

1 A Crowley cliché for people he did not like.

habit of wriggling as if consumed by an inward itch, abundant and wiry black hair which she sometimes dyed, strong, very sharp, regular teeth, deep violet eyes, set wide apart, and obliquely like Chinese eyes. Her cheek-bones were high, and her expression fierce. Her breasts were quite undeveloped, and her body like a man's, or rather like a boy's. Her vulva was lean and muscular, the nymphae hardly developed at all.

He does not tell us anything of Leah's personality, for he was incapable of drawing a portrait of anyone; his summary of her as having 'a poignant sadness and a sublime simplicity', the perfect psychological equipment for a heroine of a Gothic novel, does not describe any woman, and is untrue of Leah Hirsig (who kept in step with Aleister Crowley for six years) in particular.

Leah was Swiss born but had been brought up in America since the age of two. From Alma Hirsig's autobiographical sketch, we learn that there were five sisters and three brothers, that their father was a drunkard, and that their mother had taken all nine children to America to get away from him.

Alma's (Marion Dockerill's) account of her and Leah's meeting with Crowley does not tally with the Beast's description but the main facts are the same. 'The little mouse-like creature, pure and sweet' of Alma's version, lost – or perhaps found – her soul after Crowley had directed his hypnotic gaze upon her and put her on her back as a fakir does a cock he has hypnotised. He said that she reminded him of Solomon's friend, 'for she had no breasts'. There was no dragging Leah away after that, and Alma, who had brought her into the magician's cave, foolishly left without her.

They did not meet again until January of the following year. 'She swears I telephoned to ask her, and perhaps I did. I have my moments of imbecile impulse,' said Crowley. The two sisters came to ask his advice on how to find accommodation in Greenwich Village, or so runs Crowley's story. Leah, it seems, was attending a series of lectures on law, and wanted to be near the New York University. And in the meantime she had given birth to a child, Hansi, whom Crowley called Dionysus.

Crowley's studio was one large room; the bed was concealed by a three-fold screen on the canvas surface of which he had painted a design of the sun, moon, and holy fire of the Hindus. Leah and

² The cult of Pierre Bernard, 'Oom the Omnipotent', called 'The Secret Order of Tantricks'.

¹ My Life in a Love Cult: A Warning to all Young Girls by Marion Dockerill, Better Publishing Company, Dunellen, N.J., 1928.

Alma began to admire it, and other paintings, and while they were talking, Crowley, who did not waste time, took off Leah's clothes and started to make a sketch of her. 'What shall I paint you as?' he asked.

'Paint me as a dead soul,' she replied.

He could not sleep that night; the thought of his abortive drawing of Leah gave him no peace and he got out of bed to examine it. Suddenly he realized that if he looked at it vertically, instead of horizontally, it took on some meaning. A burst of creativity seized him, and all night long he painted the surface of a second three-fold screen he had acquired for the other side of the bed.

By the morning it was finished. He called it 'Dead Souls'. Leah's head is the keystone of an arch of monsters. Her face is ghastly green and there are blue-grey shadows beneath the ribs of her emaciated body. On the panel on her left is a kneeling negress, with an enormous parrot on her shoulders; her gaze is fixed adoringly on the Queen of Dead Souls; and on Leah's right is another woman, also on her knees, huddled together as if in agony, her lustreless hair cascading to her hips. And along the entire base of the screen are rows of mis-shapen heads, 'all anguish, all perversity, all banishment from the world of reasonable things'.

Said Crowley of his masterpiece: 'The screen is grotesque, yet it is undeniably a work of genius. It possesses a unity. The dead souls have composed a living soul. Everyone who saw it went away horror-struck.'

Later in the day Leah called. The Beast drew her to him, told her to kneel in the centre of the magic circle painted on the floor. Firstly, he performed the Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram to render the circle impregnable; then, with an act of sexmagic, he consecrated her as his Scarlet Woman, she who rode triumphant upon him.

The ceremony concluded with his painting between her insignificant breasts the Mark of the Beast (the cross within the circle, or the sun and moon with the balls dependent – I do not know which), not branding her with this mark with a Chinese dagger heated in the fire for that purpose as stated in the New York Journal of 13 March 1926. Thus was born the Ape of Thoth, the magical title Leah Hirsig took as she was hurried through the portals of the A:A:. William Seabrook, whom Frank Harris had introduced to Crowley in New York during 1917, also said that Leah was branded with the Mark of the Beast, but he was

being only sensational. He certainly saw the mark, whether branded or painted, because Leah, in her exalted state, sat about all day stark naked.

I University Place was too small for both of them, and within a short time, they found a larger studio at 63 Washington Square South, its three windows on the third floor looking out across the tree tops to the opening of Fifth Avenue. Crowley packed up his paintings and books and his new love, the Ape of Thoth, and moved in. Shortly afterwards he was interviewed by *The Evening World*.

The photograph of Crowley that stares out of the page is recognisable, for who else could it be? But he has greatly changed; a flabbiness has arisen, and the little cupid-bow mouth is lost in the fleshy immensity of the face with its cold, staring gaze.

The room the reporter described was one of luxury: cavernous easy-chairs, mahogany davenports, expensive tapestries, a fine rug or two, a many-pillowed divan, and here and there a rare rosewood antique.

The walls of this studio are covered with the wildest maelstrom of untamed and unrelated colors ever confined under one roof. They look like a collision between a Scandinavian sunset and a paint-as-you-please exhibit of the Independent Artists' Association. The effect is riotous, blinding – but not distressing, after one gets used to it. Mr Crowley helps one to do that with a dash of cognac . . .

He also painted a neat little legend about himself and his activities during recent years for the readers of *The Evening World*: at the outbreak of the Great War he was in the confidential service of the British Government. The dream-clouds mount . . . in this service he was shot in the leg. Then he was sent to America on a special mission.

Poverty and humiliation are the words which Crowley used to describe his five years' stay in America. He had no money of his own, apart from the pittance he earned as editor of, and chief contributor to, *The International*, whose circulation could have been only tiny. How, then, did he furnish a luxurious apartment and have expensive cigarettes and cognac? Leah had no money. She was teaching singing and other subjects in Public School No 40 in the Bronx. Had he learned the secret of getting gold according to the system of Abra-Melin? One of the chapters in

1 Witchcraft: its Power in the World Today, 1940.

this grimoire is, How to obtain as much gold and silver as one may wish, both to be able to provide for the necessities of life, and to live in opulence. Perhaps the Cat or the Snake or the Owl or the Monkey or all four of them had loosened their purse strings, as Victor Neuburg and George Raffalovich had done, to supply a little opulence for the Master?

The interview with *The Evening World* brought forth Crowley's ideas on himself as a painter.

'What sort of artist am I? Oh, I don't know just what to call myself. I'd say, off-hand, that I was an old master, because I'm a painter mostly of dead souls.'

'Study art? Never have and never intend to.'

Crowley did not paint for art's sake or for life's sake, but merely to express his fascination, illumination, disgust, and produced hideous women, the phallus, the deathless gods, the wise old man, and dead souls.

So here in this studio of three windows, one of which was twenty feet wide, lived the Beast and the Ape of Thoth.

Volume III, No I of *The Equinox* now appeared. Why Volume III? What of the ten numbers of Volume II? For five years Crowley had been unable to produce his *Review of Scientific Illuminism*, formerly issued twice a year; so Volume II, comprising ten fat numbers, became a volume of *Silence*, after one of *Speech*, self-denial and circumstance joining to keep it unpublished.

Volume III, No I, the so-called blue *Equinox*, because it has a blue cover, was published in America by the Universal Publishing Company of Detroit, whom Crowley castigates in *The Confessions*. It was his last throw in this venture, written as usual almost entirely by Crowley himself, with a colour reproduction of the Master Therion 'in His Holy Meditation' from a painting by his friend and pupil, Leon Kennedy. Halfway through the book, the stern features of Crowley in evening dress, covered with medals and the insignia of office, stare out of a photograph. This is *Baphomet*, the Outer Head of the Order of Oriental Templars, and the Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains that are in the sanctuary of the Gnosis, and of many other orders.

The volume opens with the *Hymn to Pan*, Crowley's most effective poem. As an evocation, it achieves, I think, its aim, and was frequently used by Crowley for this purpose in magical rites. It is the dance of Pan and the dissolution of consciousness. Pan is the Antichrist, symbol of lust and magic.

HYMN TO PAN

Thrill with lissome lust of the light, O man! My man! Come careering out of the night Of Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan! Come over the sea. From Sicily and from Arcady! Roaming as Bacchus, with fauns and pards And nymphs and satyrs for thy guards, On a milk-white ass, come over the sea To me, to me, Come with Apollo in bridal dress (Shepherdess and pythoness) Come with Artemis, silken shod, And wash thy white thigh, beautiful God, In the moon of the woods, on the marble mount, The dimpled dawn of the amber fount! Dip the purple of passionate prayer In the crimson shrine, the scarlet snare, The soul that startles in eyes of blue To watch thy wantonness weeping through The tangled grove, the gnarléd bole Of the living tree that is spirit and soul And body and brain - come over the sea. (Io Pan! Io Pan!) Devil or god, to me, to me, My man! my man! Come with trumpets sounding shrill Over the hill! Come with drums low muttering From the spring! Come with flute and come with pipe! Am I not ripe? I, who wait and writhe and wrestle With air that hath no boughs to nestle My body, weary of empty clasp, Strong as a lion and sharp as an asp -Come, O come! I am numb With the lonely lust of devildom. Thrust the sword through the galling fetter.

All-devourer, all-begetter: Give me the sign of the Open Eve. And the token erect of thorny thigh. And the word of madness and mystery, O Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan Pan! Pan. I am a man: Do as thou wilt, as a great god can, O Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! I am awake In the grip of the snake. The eagle slashes with beak and claw: The gods withdraw: The great beasts come, Io Pan! I am borne To death on the horn Of the Unicorn. I am Pan! Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan! I am thy mate, I am thy man. Goat of thy flock, I am gold, I am god, Flesh to thy bone, flower to thy rod. With hoofs of steel I race on the rocks Through solstice stubborn to equinox. And I rave; and I rape and I rip and I rend Everlasting, world without end. Mannikin, maiden, maenad, man, In the might of Pan. Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan! Io Pan! Moscow

One of the items in this number of *The Equinox* is 'Liber CI', an open letter to those who wish to join the Order of the Oriental Templars. In the manner of Sergei Nechaev, who informed his five followers that he was head of a vast organisation spread over the whole of Russia, Crowley offered membership of this august and ancient 'body of initiates' to the people of America, and printed the regulations of the Order which 'come into force in any district where membership exceeds one thousand souls'.¹

'Liber CI' starts with an Epistle from Baphomet to Sir George Macnie Cowie, Very Illustrious and Very Illuminated Pontiff and Epopt of the Areopagus of the VIIIth Degree O.T.O., Grand

1 There was an O.T.O. lodge in South Africa under the leadership of Thomas James Windram or Frater Semper Paratus X° : he died in 1939.

Treasurer General, Keeper of the Golden Book, etc., etc., who at that time was absconding with the funds of the Order in England. Or so Crowley said. According to *The Confessions* written some years later in Tunis, George Macnie Cowie, also described as the Grand Treasurer, Art Editor of Nelson's the publishers of Edinburgh, 'deaf and dumb',' is blamed for defrauding the Order ('The Order had been systematically defrauded. Let me instance only one item. A sum of £500 was entered *twice*.'), and for making Crowley upon his return to England penniless. Finally Cowie is described as insane.²

Among the regulations for the good conduct of the Order set out in 'Liber CI' is the ambitious, not to say snobbish, injunction (which irritated at least one humble would-be follower) that 'Every Brother is expected to use all his influence with persons in a superior station of life (so called) to induce them to join the Order. Royal personages, ministers of State, high officials in the Diplomatic, Naval, Military, and Civil Services are particularly to be sought after.'

The work was issued with the assistance of the Ape of Thoth at the spring equinox of 1919.

Most of the summer of that year, Crowley spent at the extremity of Long Island. This was another Magical Retirement. There is no mention of Leah. She was not with him. The Beast had retreated to his lair; he was communing with his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, and neither man nor woman must disturb him. And from this retirement he learned that the current was exhausted. 'I had finished my work in America and began to prepare my escape.'

But first of all he set out on a holiday to the south, stayed with his friends of Greenwich Village, William and Kate Seabrook,

1 The late Mr G. M. Cowie was, in fact, only deaf. 'There is a lion in my path in the shape of total want of hearing,' he wrote.

2 When Crowley accused someone of robbing him, which he did often enough, the truth of the matter was usually the other way round. In the case of George Macnie Cowie, this is certainly so, for Crowley's letters to him before 1915 invariably begin by thanking him for a donation – such as £100 or a mere £50. The only occasion on which Crowley sent Cowie anything was just before the Beast's departure for America. He addressed Cowie with the customary pomposity of freemasonic and occult bodies – Very Illustrious Sir Knight, Most Wise and Excellent Councillor of His Most Sacred Majesty, and Most Dear Brother – and enclosed a cheque for £6 which was dishonoured at the bank.

who were spending the summer at their farmhouse near Decatur, Atlanta. Crowley had a great affection for William Seabrook. He said of him that he was one of the four men that he truly loved; he had also an equally great affection for Kate, whom he used, as he probably used William, as an assistant in acts of sexual magic for a variety of objects.

The local press interviewed him, the 'Poet-Painter who Studied Magic Under Indian Savants', and printed a summary of his life. 'Twice he has walked across the Sahara Desert; many times across Broadway; he has led mountain climbing expeditions into the most remote corners of the earth; he has been everywhere, done everything, except visit Georgia, and now he's doing that. Certainly Atlanta has never had a more unusual visitor.'

In the photograph accompanying the interview, he has his one lock of hair on his otherwise bald and shaved head, and sits in his plus-four suit before the easel, paintbrush in hand and cigar in mouth.

But where Leah was and how she paid the rent of the studio with three windows, and what she thought of her lover sitting alone in a tent beyond Montauk, and then disappearing south without her, I do not know.

16 CONCUBINES ONE AND TWO

THE war was over and Crowley wanted to go back to Europe. He was not sorry at the thought of leaving America for, apart from achieving the exalted grade of Magus, which put him on the level with a Buddha, he had accomplished nothing there. He summed up his past five years as a failure; he 'was simply too young, ignorant, and biased to make any impression on the United States'. At most, he described his wanderings in America as an unconscious preparation for his real mission yet to come.

'I cried, like Elijah: Alas! This is no country for the poet Aleister Crowley, or the Adept, *To Mega Therion* [The Great Beast], whose hope to help his fellow men has this one anchor: Truth shall make you free!'

During 1919, Achad communicated to him the Key to the Mysteries – the word AL, meaning (in Hebrew) God, and Not. The reflection of AL (God) is LA (Not). That is to say AL combines the positive and the negative in one cypher. Many mysteries in *The Book of the Law* immediately became clear to Crowley and he changed the name of *Liber Legis* to accord with this discovery.

On 16 December 1919, he left Detroit for New York; then sailed homewards with enthusiasm for England and his future magical mission, leaving behind him, according to his friend, Frank Harris, a string of worthless cheques. And upon his arrival in England (thanks to Commodore Gaunt's advice to the British authorities) all he received for his pro-German activities during the war was a trouncing from John Bull. He proceeded to the house of his aunt at Eton Lodge, Outram Road, Croydon, the very house he had urged Count Zeppelin, through the pages of The International, to bomb to smithereens, and made himself comfortable amid the Victorian furniture. 'Here I am safely at home. Not only has the war changed nothing in this house of my aunt's where I have roosted, but they haven't altered the position of a piece of furniture since Queen Victoria came to the throne,' he wrote to Jane Wolfe.

1 This doctrine has many ramifications which have been explored by Kenneth Grant in his *Aleister Crowley and the Hidden God*, published by Muller, autumn 1973.

He looked for his old chela, Victor Neuburg, but failed to find him; with Crowley out of sight, but not out of mind, the little hunchback poet had married and settled down; and when he heard from the gossip in Soho that the Beast had returned, he lay low.

Crowley had no intention of remaining in England; his asthma and bronchitis made it advisable for him to seek a warmer climate. Besides, England was upside-down after the war. He had in mind his old stamping ground, the north coast of Africa. His original plan was to join the Ape of Thoth in Switzerland, where she had gone with one of her sisters, but for a reason which he called obscure, he wired to Leah to meet him in Paris instead. And in Paris on 11 January 1920, exactly a year since Leah had decided in New York to become his Scarlet Woman, she put her hand in his and together they swore to start in the Old World a temple to Thelema which they had failed to establish in the New. With the Ape was her 2-year-old son, Hansi.

The memory of all those women who could still evoke chords in Crowley's heart subsided before the image of a Hollywood actress who had been writing to him since the beginning of the previous year. This was Jane Wolfe who had played in films for the Pioneer Picture Company. She was interested in occultism and when one day during 1917, an Englishman called Sheridan Bickers, the husband of Betty Bickers, told her about Aleister Crowley, she decided that he was the Master she was seeking. After studying his works for two years, she had a vision of him; this prompted her to write to him through *The International*.

His letters to her were soon expressing sentiments of love, faltering at first, then, in sudden sentences, overbold. He saw her astrally: 'Now I see you before me shining in the dark.' But not actually, for they had not yet met. When he had left America he had told her to come to Europe and put herself into his hands, an invitation which she had accepted.

He thought of her continually. 'Jane Wolfe haunts me – a Ghost of the Future! Ghostly indeed; her picture and her letters tell me little.'

He carefully considered her for the role of Scarlet Woman, in spite of having one already – Leah Hirsig. Jane had sent him her horoscope without, however, divulging the year of her birth, and from it he compared her with previous holders of the office of Scarlet Woman. 'The question arises, is Jane Wolfe, who is extremely Lunar, the Scarlet Woman? None of the other women

had been of Lunar type. Ouarda [Rose Kelly] was Fire, of the Archer; so was Hilarion [Jane Foster, "the cat"]; Virakam was Air, of the Balance; Ahitha, Fire and Earth, of Ram and Bull; Almeira, Air of Twins.

The Ape was pregnant. The Beast was a little worried about her. Who was to look after her and where was she to have the baby?

During the Atlantic crossing, Leah had become friendly with a Provençal girl, who had spent some years in America as a nursery governess. Her name was Ninette Shumway (née Fraux); she, too, had a child, a boy about the same age as Hansi. The father, an American, had been killed in a car accident, so Ninette, now husbandless, was looking for another job of nursery governess.

'Well, why not ask her to join us?' Crowley suggested. It seemed an excellent idea. The Ape was persuaded; and after depositing her and Hansi at Fontainebleau, Crowley went to Paris to meet Ninette.

He said that he received a shock at the sight of Ninette; she was drooping like a thirsty flower. Her brat (to use Crowley's expression), whom she dragged along listlessly, had a ghastly white face and limbs like a damp rag. He was swept away by pity and became determined to begin his work of saving mankind by knocking these two into shape.

A house at 11-bis rue de Neuville, Fontainebleau, was rented; and there they all encamped until they could decide where to begin the Great Work and establish a permanent centre for magick. The nursery governess was given the magical name of Cypris, and her child dubbed Hermes.

At this time, he received another sign from the gods of his mission on earth. On 30 January 1920, he went to Paris to buy pencils, Mandarin, a palette, Napoleon brandy, canvases, 'and other appurtenances of the artist's dismal trade'. And while there he looked up a former mistress, Jane Cheron, to whom he had dedicated some poems published in *The Equinox* before the war.

1 Although Almeira held the office of Scarlet Woman – she immediately preceded Alostrael – Crowley says little about her and she remains a mystery. He does not mention her in *The Confessions*, which is strange, and there is only a brief reference to her in the 'Long Comment' (as opposed to the 'Short Comment') on *The Book of the Law*, where she suddenly appears and is described as 'A doubtful case. Bertha Almeira Prykryl *née* Bruce. Delayed assumption of duties, hence made way for number 7 [Leah Hirsig].'

She is like a flower washed up
On the shore of life by the sea of luck,
A strange and venomous flower . . .

In his novel *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, the character Haidée Lamoureux, with hollow cheeks, crow's feet at the corners of her eyes, deathly thin fingers covered with enormous sapphires and diamonds – the ideal Scarlet Woman, in fact – is drawn from Jane Cheron.

He had a three-fold reason for calling on her: he wanted to see a man with whom she was living (he does not say why), to make love to her, and to smoke with her a few pipes of opium. He had last seen her in 1946.

He obtained none of these objectives, and was just about to depart when she said to him, 'Wait a minute', and produced from a drawer a folded cloth. 'Shut your eyes,' she said.

When he opened them, Jane Cheron had unfolded the cloth; it was about four feet in length, and upon it, in silk embroidered appliqué, was the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu.

Jane Cheron explained. In February 1917, she and her young man had gone to the south of France to get cured of the opium habit. In such cases insomnia is frequent. One night, however, she had fallen asleep immediately and on waking in the morning, she found that she had – between sleeping and waking – copied the pantacle of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu on a great sheet of paper. In other words she had done it in her sleep.

Crowley was amazed. From what on earth had she copied the stele? he asked. The answer to that was simple: it is reproduced in colour in No 7 of *The Equinox*, and she had taken the book with her. The sceptical will think this a sufficient explanation and will reject perhaps the deeper significance Crowley saw in it. 'It is very remarkable,' he commented,

that so large a sheet of paper should have been at hand; also that they should have taken that special book on such a journey; but still more that she should have chosen that picture, nay, that she, who had never done anything of the sort before, should have done it at all. More yet, that she should have spent three months in making a permanent thing of it. Most of all, that she should have shown it to me at the very moment when I was waiting an 'unmistakable' sign.

All this, he summed up, was clear proof of the power and in-

He walked with Sister Cypris in the forest of Fontainebleau; Sister Alostrael, because of her condition, was resting at home. He saw on one such outing, the trunk of an exceptionally large tree lying on the ground; its circumference was eight times larger than that of any other tree near it. The Father of the Flock, he poetically called it, and wondered if he should take it as a sign that he was about to die.

It did not take Crowley long to knock Cypris into shape; she flourished under his care, he said. She did more than this; she fell in love with him. 'She saw me as her saviour no less than Jairus's daughter must have seen Jesus, and her gratitude soon turned into an ecstasy of romantic love,' he wrote.

And on one spring-like day, after lunch at the Barbison, the wine went to their heads, and they raced through the forest, fell down upon a mossy bank in a glade and clasped each other in their arms. This is what Crowley had had in mind all along, of course, and he never gave a thought to Leah in her advanced pregnancy at home, waiting for him to return.

'We walked home on air and the next few days passed like a

pageant of purple pleasure and passion.'

Naturally, or perhaps, in the light of the New Law of Life which Crowley was preaching, unnaturally, Sister Cypris grew jealous, even violently jealous, of the Beast's attachment to the Scarlet Woman, Alostrael. Cypris wanted him all for herself. Did he not love her? Couldn't they get married? In a riot of emotion she did not consider the First Concubine of the Beast, neither the Law of Thelema, and she was amazed and angry when Crowley failed to agree with her.

He patiently explained why he would not desert Alostrael: he was above such pettiness; as a human being he had evolved to a higher ethical plane. It was not that he loved Sister Cypris less, but the Law of do what thou wilt more.

He awoke early in the morning, gathered his tiny flock around him and went out to greet the Sun, their Father. This was the Dawn Meditation.

'Hail unto Thee who art Ra in Thy rising, even unto Thee who art Ra in Thy strength, Harmachis¹ in Thy Beauty, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Uprising of the Sun.'

Then he went back to bed.

1 The personification of the rising sun, Hor-m-akhet.

Where should they go to do the Great Work? The Yi King or 'Book of Changes' was consulted. Should they go to Algeria? Or the Italian lakes? How about Spain? Naples or Sicily?

The Chinese Oracle replied indecisively.

Crowley had been consulting the *Yi King*, in James Legge's translation, daily and sometimes several times a day since 1912.

At the end of February a child was born to Alostrael. They called her Anne Leah, and for domestic purposes, Poupée; this was little Hansi's spontaneous name for her. And soon afterwards Sister Cypris, who could not cure herself of the unthelemic desire to have the Beast all for herself, became pregnant. She loved Crowley and still hated her more exalted sister, the Ape of Thoth.

'She went from bad to worse during the following months, but I maintained firm correctness¹ and at last she gave up trying to drag me down to her ignoble ideal,' said Crowley, putting the matter in a thelemic nutshell. And he did his best to teach her to rise above the meanness of the monogamic ideal, until out of her despair grew a glimmer of understanding and hope – or so the Beast believed.

One day he picked up and read Sister Cypris's magical diary; he pronounced it an unsurpassed masterpiece, although written by 'an ignorant, untrained nursemaid'. She had analysed herself so deeply and so accurately, and had dramatised her tragedy so powerfully, that the heart of the Beast was moved. He called it a marvellous manuscript, and added an opinion which is surprising from a man who had published four works of pornography and whose own magical diary is overwhelmingly obscene. 'We must, I fear, bow in the Temple of Rimmon' to the extent of editing such passages which I hate to do; their brutal obscenity is an essential element in her character.'

On 1 March 1920, at 5.30 pm, he consulted the *Yi King*. Where should he start the Great Work? he asked. For nothing but the universal acceptance of the Law of Thelema as the sole and sufficient basis of conduct could save the world. He must found a community, the archetype of all future communities, whose only code of convention will be the Law of Do what thou wilt.

Shall I spend April and June in or near Marseilles? Fire of Water. No. Capri? Earth of Air. No. Cefalu? Earth of Lingam. This couldn't be better.

The Chinese Oracle had spoken, and Crowley made a very 1 'Firm correctness', a phrase from Legge's Yi King.

22 Kings, ch. 5, v. 18.

emphatic note in his diary that it was solely on this answer from the *Yi King* that he went to Cefalu.

He began straightway to make the necessary arrangements. On 8 March Alostrael returned from the hospital with Anne Leah. On 21 March he said good-bye to his house in Fontainebleau and led his two concubines with the children to Paris. The next day he saw Alostrael and the baby off to London and went south to Bordeaux with Cypris and the two little boys. On 27 March they arrived in Naples. The object of an act of sex-magic in the Hotel Metropole of that city was 'successful and speedy arrival at Cefalu'. The Assistant was Ninette; the mode of operation, Crowley's favourite, per vas nefandum.

17. THE SACRED ABBEY OF THELEMA

It was inevitable that Crowley, who made out of Rabelais's *Fay ce que vouldras* a solemn 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law', and who had taken for his magical word *Thelema* (the country in which Gargantua's monk built his fantastic abbey), should sooner or later establish an abbey of his own. The idea must have been with him for long; but it was not until he came to Cefalu that he decided the time was ripe and the place suitable.

There is, alas, nothing new under the sun. When Sir Francis Dashwood, England's eccentric Chancellor of the Exchequer, established his Brotherhood of Saint Francis, he anticipated the Beast by nearly two centuries. Crowley's simple villa at Cefalu looks pale, of course, beside the wealth and ornateness of Medmenham Abbey in West Wycombe; but the parallel cannot be carried far for the intention of these two founders of thelemic abbeys was different. Sir Francis would never have pretended that his abbey was other than for frolic and debauchery; whereas Crowley's establishment (in which not orgies took place but *The Orgia* were performed) was designed for the serious purpose of bending the world to his demoniac vision. 'And my house is going to be The Whore's Hell, a secret place of the quenchless fire of Lust and the eternal torment of Love.'

In order that no one should think he lacked in seriousness, by modelling his abbey and his creed on Rabelais's abbey, he persuaded himself that the good doctor was an initiate who, in 1542, had been aware of the New Aeon, even to the name of the keyword, which he gave to his abbey, *thélème*. In other words, Rabelais was a great adept, a prophet of serious things to come, not 'just a naughty writer'.

He praised the local gods for directing him, the day he arrived, to the vacant villa on the hillside half a mile beyond Cefalu, the fishing village on the northern shore of Sicily. 'We are high on the neck of the peninsula', he wrote, 'and can see West of Palermo, East over the sea, North is the mighty rock of Cephaloedium and behind us to the South rise hills, green with trees and grass. My garden is full of flowers and promise of fruit.'

The villa, set amid olive groves, was promptly taken; later the

lease was signed jointly by Sir Alastor de Kerval and the Contessa Lea Harcourt, the names Crowley and Leah assumed during their stay on the island.

The Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu in the island of Sicily is housed in a villa on the hillside above Santa Barbara, occupied by the Great Wild Beast, To Mega Therion 666, a Magus $9^{\circ} = 2^{\circ}$ A.A., Alastor de Kerval, the Wanderer in the Waste, by Ninette Fraux his Second Concubine, by Howard her son born in wedlock, and by Hansi, the son born in love of his First Concubine, Alostrael, the Scarlet Woman, to one Edward Carter, from the second day of April, 1920, *Era Vulgari*, that is, in the Sixteenth Year of the Aeon of Horus, \odot being in 12° Υ and 0 in 7° \Longrightarrow .

Crowley was elated, and in the twilight of his first day at Cefalu, his act of sex-magic with Sister Cypris had for its object 'Salutation to the Gods and Goddesses of this place! May they grant us abundance of all good things, and inspire me to the creation of Beauty.'

During his third day he saw a 'wonderful ugly girl with a big mouth' among the local inhabitants, just the kind of girl he loved to paint.

Betty May, a later visitor to the Abbey, has recorded her impressions of the place. From the village of Cefalu, one has a long walk up a narrow, winding, mountain path. To Crowley, the villa was an Abbey, a *Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum* – he had cards printed with this title as his address – but to Betty May it was just a farmhouse without any sanitary arrangements. It was certainly not a patch on the abbey, or temple, which Crowley wanted to built on top of the hills at Cefalu, and for which he tried to raise a loan from an Italian bank. The plan of this ideal temple, circular in design, has eight pillars to hold up a glass-domed roof, 44 feet high, with outer courts and buildings for every kind of magical and social purpose. But the actual Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu in Sicily, the villa which Crowley rented in the spring of 1920 was quite suitable and sufficient for his purposes.

It was a one-storied building of stone, plastered over and painted white, with a tiled roof, and walls 18 inches thick. Five rooms led off from a central hall, the Sanctum Sanctorum, or the temple, of the thelemic mysteries. A magic circle, upon which was superimposed a pentagram, its five points touching the circumference, was painted on the red-tiled floor. In the centre of the

circle was a six-sided altar, which contained a copy of the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, with four candles on either side of it, a copy of *The Book of the Law*, with six candles either side, and other odds and ends, such as the Bell, Burin, Lamen, Sword, Cup, and the *Record* of the Abbey (a kind of visitors' book in which important events were also recorded), and the Cakes of Light, the composition of which is given on page 299.

To the east of the circle, facing the candle-lit altar, was the throne of the Beast, and between his throne and the altar stood a burning charcoal brazier, hung with ritual daggers. The throne of the Scarlet Woman was in the west. And round the inside of the circle were the Hebrew names of God.

On the walls of the temple, on those of Crowley's bedroom, 'La Chambre des Cauchemars', and of other rooms at the Abbey were Crowley's own startling paintings of IX° and other magick. Their purpose was to induce, through familiarity, indifference to, or forgetfulness about, sex. One was of a naked man who was being sodomised by the goat-god, Pan. His foaming seed was spraying the Whore of the Stars, who stood seductively before him, arms outstretched. (While magically masturbating - an VIII° operation - Crowley had thought of Hermes sodomising him. See his Magical Record.) Another painting had more humour but was no less serious, Crowley's Land of Cockayne, a landscape with river, down which junks and sampans floated. On the bank a group of men and women were dancing, arousing, so to speak, the force of Kundalini. In the background of this genre painting were sinister mountain peaks, round which a gigantic serpent, a kind of Loch Ness monster, slowly wound; it had been aroused by these jollifications. With its penis head it blinked suspiciously at these silly humans.

Crowley was considered, not without reason, to be both obscene and blasphemous; but where his own religion of *thelema* was concerned, he was as devout as his father and mother had been. When the Thelemites got up in the morning they put on their magical robes, took their appropriate magical weapons – the man a wand, sword, or dagger, the woman a chalice or cup – and, standing upright and facing east, they uttered the short prayer called the Cabbalistic Cross. This consists in touching the forehead and saying *Ateh* (unto Thee), the breast and uttering the word *Malkuth* (the Kingdom), the right shoulder and saying *ve-Geburah* (and the Power), the left shoulder and uttering *ve-Gedulah* (and the Glory). The hands are then clasped together.

without letting go of the magical weapon, and *le-Olahm*, *Amen* (to the Ages, Amen) is pronounced vibratingly.

A circle is then formed by going round the four corners of the room, from east to south, to west, to north, and at each corner a pentagram is vigorously drawn in the air with the magical weapon, and the god name is vibrated. IHVH (Ye-ho-wau) in the east, ADNI (Adonai) in the south, AHIH (Eheieh) in the west, AGLA (Agla) in the north. Next, with arms extended in the form of a cross, this is said, 'Before me Raphael, behind me Gabriel, on my right hand, Michael, on my left hand, Auriel, for about me flames the Pentagram, and in the Column stands the six-rayed Star.' Finally, the Cabbalistic Cross is repeated in the east.

The Thelemites also went outside the abbey in the morning, at noon, in the evening, and at midnight to make their Adoration of the Sun, a short prayer, *Hail unto Thee, who art Ra in Thy rising*. Ra is the rising sun. At noon the sun is Hathoor, in the evening Tum, and at midnight, Khephra, the winged beetle.

And on any especial occasion such as that of inducting a new member into the Order, a marriage between a brother and a sister, a birth or a death, they would perform 'Liber XV', Crowley's Gnostic Mass which begins with the deacon's pronouncing 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I proclaim the Law of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty in the name of IAO' (the Gnostic cryptogram of Jehovah).

On 14 April 1920, the sun being in 24° of Aries and the moon in 4° of Pisces (as was written in the *Record* of the Abbey), Alostrael with Poupée arrived – 'the First Concubine of The Beast, His Scarlet Woman and their bastard free-born Ann Leah, or Poupée' – and was given the additional title of Virgin Guardian of the Sangraal. Poupée was ill; no one knew what was the matter with her.

During the spring months, he explored the countryside and climbed the hills around Cefalu with Sister Cypris, whom he also called Beauty. And when the weather grew warm, they bathed naked in the sea. 'Les jours se suivent; this is really a perfect place,' he pronounced. The only disturbing factor was the continued illness of Poupée. A doctor was summoned and on the magical plane Crowley cast the Yi King sticks.

'Will Poupée grow up to be a big girl? Hexagram XLII. Air of Fire. The opposite to the first symbol, Sun. It might be all right...'

He had established a centre for occultism where pupils could

come to study but he was uncertain about the kind of magical work he should commence. So meanwhile he acquired a dog whom he called Satan, settled into his Abbey, painted and wrote, smoked opium, sniffed snow (cocaine), ate grass (hashish), and helped himself to liberal doses of laudanum, veronal, and anhalonium. He claimed to have introduced anhalonium to Europe. In a marginal note in his copy of *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, against 'Anhalonium Lewinii' he wrote, 'I made many experiments on people with this drug in 1910 and subsequent years'. One of the recipients of this Crowleian potion before 1914, was Katherine Mansfield, but it made her feel only sick and unduly irritated at the sight of a picture hanging not perfectly straight on the wall – according to Gwendoline Otter, the last of the Chelsea hostesses, in whose house this meeting between Crowley and Mansfield took place.

He was also taking heroin, a drug which was first developed in Germany in 1898 as a morphine substitute, and later found to be

twice as potent as morphine.

On the day the sun entered the sign of Taurus, i.e. 20 April, the Beast celebrated the event by an act of sex-magic with both Concubines. In the middle of it, a violent quarrel broke out between Alostrael and Cypris, and Cypris, bursting into tears, snatched up a thin cloak to cover her nakedness, and ran out into the rain and the darkness. The Beast wandered about the mountainside looking for her, afraid that she might have fallen over a precipice. After calling her name for an hour, he found her and dragged her back. He observed that her son, Howard, not yet four, had helped by yelling from the Abbey window. Meanwhile, Alostrael had been at the brandy bottle and was now drunk. She greeted Sister Cypris with a curse and the fighting began again. With difficulty, Crowley persuaded Concubine No 2 to go to bed. Then Alostrael, as if she wanted to have the last word, began to vomit and throw a fit.

By 1.15 am all was quiet. To spread balm over their souls and to remind them of higher things, the Beast, between puffs at his opium pipe, began reading aloud the *Tao Te Ching*, the Chinese classic.

'Next, please! Let's all live up to - "Never dull where Crowley

To Crowley's disgust, Alostrael grew jealous of Cypris. He gave up arguing with her and merely reflected that it was a waste of

1 Satan was 'murdered' some months later to Crowley's regret.

time to make love to a jealous woman, for she regarded his love as her right, not a favour.

Poupée grew worse; she was incapable of absorbing any food, was literally wasting away. Crowley consulted her horoscope and worked out its progressions for the immediate future. The approach of her Sun in opposition to Mars gave him cause for alarm, especially as Mars was in radical opposition to Saturn. He prayed that she would continue to survive till the following week, when the Sun would be in 7° Taurus. He was really very worried, and described his feelings thus: 'I have been howling like a mad creature nearly all day. I want my epitaph to be "Half a woman made with half a god". Is it My Will to save my baby's life?' The YI King was asked again, and the sticks returned the answer which he feared might mean Release from Earth. To escape from his anxiety, he began painting a big landscape.

Having only two wives who can grow insanely jealous of each other was a problem which preoccupied him. When one falls sick, a strain is thrown on the other. The Koran, which allows four wives, has found the ideal. And this, Crowley decided, was because with two women you have to explain each to the other; with three, two compare notes while you're with the third; but

four makes a crowd, and can be neglected.

During the spring evenings, the rays of the setting sun coming from beyond Palermo, he painted and looked down into the wine-coloured ocean. He was moved by the beauty of the world and observed that he could count on two hours' visual opera every night.

'The Sun never repeats Himself. Tonight His shafts fell in front of the mountains and dissolved them, so that one could not tell them from the clouds, except by one's memory of the sky-line.'

He painted a group of figures he called 'The Lesbians', and touched up 'The Fisherman', a large canvas he had brought with him from Fontainebleau, 'putting in a whore for him as he was lonely'.

The spectacle of the Beast, the lobes of his ears pierced and hung with rings, dabbing oil-paints on to the canvas, or smoking his opium pipe on the sofa inside the Abbey, even in the company of two wives, approaches the bourgeois ideal of the respectable, although eccentric, gentleman on holiday.

He suffered from insomnia, and would gratefully doze off when and where he could. On 2 May, at 1.50 pm, he suddenly awoke from a deeper sleep than usual, and sprang to his feet in horror, 'every nerve taut as a whip to the point of positive pain, my mind blank but almost insane with nameless apprehension'.

He searched for an analogy with which to describe the condition, Poe's 'Buried Alive' perhaps, or some ghastly state of mind from Baudelaire. It had happened several times before. Half asleep, half awake, he had heard a sound in the next room. Suddenly he had become conscious of some unauthorized, alien presence in the house, combined with the overwhelming feeling of being stifled. He admitted that both he and Alostrael had had hallucinations recently; he had heard sharp, clear raps, sometimes single, sometimes a cadence; also human footsteps when no one had been there. The Virgin Guardian had had hallucinations of vision as well, seeing the Beast outside the house or in the kitchen, wherever, in fact, she turned her gaze.

Crowley's feeling of being stifled was connected with his asthma and dyspnoea, which a sniff of cocaine would relieve. Opium, cocaine, ether, morphine, heroin, and hashish, as well as wine and liqueurs, were kept in his room. Drugs were available for all, and the brandy bottle, according to Alma Hirsig, for little Hansi who was curious to know what brandy was like.

The Beast's heart was softened at the thought of Poupée; she seems to have been the only feminine creature he loved without reserve. He sent a wire to Naples for some Allenbury's gripe water to be dispatched immediately to him, and once again consulted the Chinese Oracle, who took a rather poor view of the baby's chances of recovery.

Between struggling against inertia and asthma, he drew or painted, dictated plays, stories, essays, devised new magical rituals. And he began to think of a major work which, of all his writings, would attract the dull, unwilling public: the story of his life, the autobiography of the Master Therion.

But for the present, things must be pulled into shape, otherwise the Great Work would deteriorate. Crowley sketched out a routine for the daily life of the Abbey. On awakening, the Virgin Guardian of the Sangraal would beat a gong and proclaim the Law: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. To which everyone, even the children, had to reply, Love is the Law, love under will.

Next, Adoration of Ra, the prayers to the Sun. Everyone went outside and made obeisance to the All-Seeing Eye.

Grace before breakfast. This began with a battery of knocks, depending on the nature of the work in hand – three for Saturn,

five for Mars, eight for Mercury, and so on. Then the head of the table, the Beast 666, said, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law', to which Alostrael replied, 'What is thy will?'

THE BEAST: It is my will to eat and drink.

ALOSTRAEL: To what end?

THE BEAST: That my body may be fortified thereby.

ALOSTRAEL: To what end?

THE BEAST: That I may accomplish the Great Work. Love is the Law, love under will. Fall to.

The meal was then eaten in silence.

The same grace was said for the main meal at noon.

About teatime, there was the Evening Adoration of the Sun; supper at 6.00 pm, preceded, of course, by the same thelemic grace, and after supper the reading of extracts from *The Book of the Law*.

During the course of the day, ritual work; this meant putting the Thelemites through their magical paces – summoning up devils, banishing them, conversing with Holy Guardian Angels, invoking the gods and so forth.

Crowley found the invocation of the gods very fruitful, and, surprisingly, described it thus: 'There's a lot of Jesus force here.' It occurred to him that one could invoke Jesus by sexual magic (IX°) as any other god, and why not? 'Isn't it a somewhat pedantic and priggish attitude,' he wrote, 'to invoke all the forces but "Jesus"? It makes him a sort of "devil" and so liable to attract all the good people.'

The routine for newcomers to the Abbey was rigorous.

1st week: Three days' hospitality. One day's silence. Three days' instruction. The Magical Oath, followed by four weeks' silence and work.

6th week: One day's instruction.

7th to 9th week: Three weeks' silence and work.

10th week: One week's instruction and repose.

11th and to 13th week. Three weeks' silence and work.

But none of the rambling bohemians who turned up at the Abbey from Paris, London, or New York adhered to this routine; and Crowley did not, of course, propose that they should, and he calls, with characteristic humour, the hypothetical disciple who completes the course, 'the survivor'. The Beast never found the balance between meditation and indulgence.

Towards the end of May, when the weather had grown warm, Leah fell ill with a fever; Crowley described her remarks in this condition as quite delirious, said that she vomited, had diarrhoea. Diagnosis: dysentery. Three days later, while the Beast was writing poetry in the middle of the night, Alostrael's illness reached the acute stage. For an hour she screamed horribly. The local doctor had been prescribing laudanum. Crowley, on the principle of too many cooks, did not want to treat her himself; but unable to bear her screams any longer, he gave her an eighth of a grain of heroin under the tongue. This sent her to sleep and he was left in peace to write two more poems.

Although the Beast's amorous hopes were concentrated upon Jane Wolfe whom he had not yet met, he proposed marriage by letter to Helen Hollis, the Snake, one of the group of women in America to whom he gave animal names. In *The Confessions*, he describes her as 'a regular street-walker', which was his ideal of womanhood. She declined his offer, and he awoke from a dream in which he was being married to 'some deformed and imbecile creature', whose fingers were twisted into strange zig-zags, so that the ring had to be bent to fit. And Crowley, the bridegroom, had to be persuaded to say. 'I do.'

On the stroke of midnight, he entered the temple to make, as usual, the Adoration to the Midnight Sun.

Hail unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy hiding, even unto Thee who art Khephra in Thy silence, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Midnight Hour of the Sun.

From where he stood before the Altar, he could see Leah through the open bedroom door. Moved by her luminous eyes and her other-worldly expression, he took his sketch book and began to draw her as she lay – she, Babalon, his Scarlet Whore of the Stars. He reflected that the word *thelema*, the Greek for 'will,' the

1 In *The Book of the Law*, Babylon is spelt Babalon. The Cabbalistic analysis of the word in this unusual orthography reveals 156, which is the number of Zion (the Holy Mountain), and of the City of the Pyramids. (In John Dee's system, the Elemental Tablets or Watch Towers of the Universe are represented as a series of 156 small figures which, in elevation, form pyramids.) The number on the other hand of Babylon is 165, which is not the number of anything relevant to Crowley's magical interests.

Similarly the Word of the Aeon, ABRAHADABRA (also Aiwass's spelling), adds up to 418, the Number of the Great Work. Crowley believed ABRACADABRA to be corrupt.

will of *Do what thou wilt*, had as its magical combination Babalon and The Beast; they were entwined together in a magical formula. He finished sketching her and added the title, 'Leah with enteritis'.

Yes, who was Leah in herself? Who was Beatrice before Dante set eyes on her? From 'a dull, ugly school-teacher, ignorant, tired and common,' he had made her his Scarlet Whore, perfect beyond all praise, an adept in all arts, a daughter of Dionysus. Her ardour, her faith, her courage were unmatched in the world. With him, she had passed through the pylons, through everything. 'No deed but they had dared it; no sorrow but they had suffered it.'

He heard from Jane Wolfe, who had accepted his invitation to the Abbey, to say that she was on her way. It appears that they arranged to meet in Tunis. He was prompted to ask the Sacred Oracle of Thelema for word of her, that is, he took a divination from one of his Holy Books and obtained this verse, 'I know that awful sound of primal joy; let us follow on the wings of the gale even unto the holy house of Hathor; let us offer the five jewels of the cow upon her altar!' He analysed his love for her and found that it was three-fold: 'I rather like the glamour of her being a "movie star"; it adds variety to a lady! I admire her intensely for her courage in coming so far to find me. I adore her name. I hope she is hungry and cruel as a wolf.'

On Monday, 21 June, he went by train with Leah, who had recovered, to Palermo; he frequently went to Palermo to buy things he could not get at Cefalu, for a change of air, to find a whore, or to go to the pictures. Then saying good-bye to Leah, he crossed over to Tunis to meet Jane but could not find her. He painted her face and performed two opera with an Arab of the name of Mohammed Tsaida who used him ('the King') as a woman, with the object of acquiring Magical Power for spreading the Law.

He returned to the Abbey.

'Has anyone seen my Jane?' And later on the same day, since he could not think of anything else, he wrote, 'I have a sort of passing curiosity to know what the bloody hell has happened to Jane.' He consulted the *Yi King* about her; the reply suggested to him that she was on the way.

2 See page 222-3.

¹ This is neither an accurate nor an honest summary of Leah Hirsig as she was when she first met Aleister Crowley.

Jane was, in fact, waiting for him in the interior of Algeria, at Bou Saada.

On 2 July, his first entry in his Magical Record was, 'I shall certainly not wait more than two weeks for her; one only has to wait three for Syphilis herself.' Two days later: 'Oh, I'm bored.' And he began to renew his interest in the woman, or rather women, he had already. Of Leah, he wrote,

I love Alostrael; she is all my comfort, my support, my soul's desire, my life's reward, my dream's fulfilment; but for her I were indeed Alastor of the Solitude. She loves me for my work; whether she understands it or not doesn't matter either to her or to me; her soul tells her that my work must be great because it is the image of the God who has made her High Priestess in his temple. She knows and loves the God in me, not the man; and therefore she has conquered the great enemy that hides behind his clouds of poisonous gas, Illusion.

He was wrong about this; the Ape of Thoth loved him as a man; the stage when she would detest him as a man and love him only as a 'god', as the instrument of the Great Work, was not yet.

But where was the real Crowley? He was lost in the kaleidoscope of a thousand Crowleys, one of whom wrote of Leah and himself thus:

Even as in me she divined and loved God, veil over veil of my man-shadow hiding Him, so I pierced through the painted ape's face, the live Death of her loose skin on her grim skeleton, and came to a great Goddess, strange, perverse, hungry, implacable, and offered up my Soul – Godhead and manhood slain at one stroke of Her paw – upon Her altar. So loving Her, rejoicing that She had accepted me for Her slave, Her Beast, Her victim, Her accomplice, I must love even Her mask, the painted simper, the lewd doll-monkey face, the haggard shamelessness of Her flat breast . . . the insolence of Death pushing through flesh's flimsy curtain . . .

This may be the language of poetry but it is not the language of truth.

He had one dream; or rather nightmare, in which Jane Wolfe was present; she was immensely fat and white. She instantly produced a 'huge penis-like organ', and informed him that he could not have any connection with her – quite a prophetic dream in fact.

And meanwhile he took an Oath of Holy Obedience to Leahnot to her as Leah Hirsig, but as Alostrael, the Scarlet Woman of the Beast. And having taken this Oath, he inveigled her or teased her to order him to eat her excrement. 'No deed but they had dared it...' It was an ordeal which he had to endure. A few days later, as another act of 'Holy Obedience', he advanced with naked breast upon her glowing cigarette. 'She discovered the physical cowardice and dread of pain which I had sunk so deep by means of daring death-mountains, wild beasts, poison and disease. She held a lighted cigarette against my breast. I shrank and moaned.'

He heard from Jane; she had arrived at Palermo, and he went to meet her. When he learned that she had been waiting for him in Bou Saada, he explained that he had intentionally sent her there to test her fortitude and confidence in him, for which ordeal he was prepared now to give her full marks. The next day he took her to Cefalu and marked her admission to the Abbey on a clean page of the *Record*.

Now then on the twenty-third day of July, 1920, era vulgari, ⊙ being in 0° of ℜ and Ŋ in 8° M, did Jane Wolfe arrive in Panormus [Palermo], and at the Abbey on the day following, there to abide as a Guest, towards the Accomplishment of the Great Work.

In her diary, Jane described the last stages of her journey as exhausting. She had had a sleepless night and the ship had run on to a sand bar in Tunis harbour. While marooned there for several hours she had had to listen to screaming winches and banging lavatory doors opposite her state-room.

In the Hotel des Palmes in Palermo, she waited for Crowley with eyes closed and head resting on the palm of her hand. Suddenly she was aroused by a voice, saying, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. . . . I am Alostrael.' She opened her eyes and saw Leah Hirsig. Leah was wearing a black dress; it was stained with a large spot of grease on which dust had settled. Her face was unwashed, her hair uncombed and whispy, nails long and black. 'How could Crowley have sent such a person to meet me?' Jane thought. 'My mind automatically said, "Filth personified".'

Leah conducted her to the Beast who was wearing a hat, a striped suit, bracelets, and carrying a walking-stick.

The evening of the next day, they all left for Cefalu. They were greeted at the Abbey by Ninette. 'Then seeing she was pregnant, I thought, "Oh, yes – his child."

Of the Abbey itself, the *Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum*, Jane said, 'It was physically filthy, and as the day wore on, I became aware of the foul miasma enveloping the place; it steamed to high heaven. I could not breathe. When I got to my room that night, I collapsed, and did not come to a sitting posture till the Fall Equinox when, alone with Ninette (A.C. and Leah were in Naples at the time) she made me laugh.'

Jane was not, of course, as the Beast had imagined and hoped. 'I now find Jane Wolfe, refusing her year of birth, misled me – I am like the girl who was to meet a "dark, distinguished gentleman" and did, he was a nigger with one eye.'

Now he drew her horoscope accurately. The nearness of her Venus to his Saturn showed her love for his wisdom. In spite of his dashed hopes, he found her a serious person, eager to help in the Great Work of liberating mankind.

A few days later Jane was initiated into the A.A... She took the magical motto of Metonith and began her first month of training. This mainly consisted in her being given some books to read and a razor with which to cut herself on the arm every time she said 'I'.

She was soon practising the postures and breathing exercises of yoga, smoking opium, and keeping a magical diary. Her dreams, the idle thought, the seemingly irrational moods were all recorded and analysed later by the Beast.

'A current of irritation deep within all day,' she wrote in her magical record. 'Now it all pops to the surface and I feel like beating Leah to get it out of my system.' On which Crowley commented in the margin in pencil, 'You must analyse (and so destroy) all this sort of thing.'

The traditional method of getting in touch with spirits is through another person. The medium is often a child, a virgin receptive to the atmosphere of this rare art. When Benyenuto Cellini and a sorcerer raised spirits one night in the Colosseum in Rome, they had with them a boy who cried out what was to be seen in the swirling smoke of the magical fire. Dr John Dee had Sir Edward Kelley to gaze into the shew-stone, 'the stone brought me by an Angel', to tell him what was to be seen therein.

Crowley, following Dee and Kelley, also had his shew-stone, and for a medium, the maid-of-all-work, Alostrael. The essential

element, unknown to Kelley, as far as I am aware, was drugs. Dee and Kelley began their sittings at Mortlake with a Christian prayer, Crowley and Leah with the invocation of the Beast's Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, in the candle-lit 'La Chambre des Cauchemars'.

'Leah has been invoking Aiwass, and got a small black figure hiding among rocks. I told her to accept this, as there is None beside Him.

'Ask Aiwass! Manifest, be content with none other,' instructed the Beast.

'He stands on a cliff . . . She goes out to him . . . He's in a black robe, short, and wears a round black hat . . .'

'Go to Him!' cried the Beast.

I must use a scythe or something before I can get there,' muttered Leah. 'He torments me. He's stripped: fine, big body, long, oval face, close-shaven. He takes The Beast's form

'Alostrael rides upon the phantom,' interpreted Crowley; he was pleased with this.

Leah spelt out the word she could dimly see; 'LACH...OT.'
'Ask for a definite statement why the word is spoken to us,'
commanded Crowley.

Alostrael did so, and for an answer was given a picture of a diamond-shaped brooch studded with jewels.

'Is it a sign of His identity?' said the Beast.

Alostrael then saw a doorway with the diamond-shaped brooch above it. She went through this doorway, turned to the right, climbed a flight of stairs, entered a wide room with an archway at the far end.

'Is Aiwass there?'

'Yes,' replied Alostrael. 'He is sitting on the floor, dressed in black.'

'Well, ride him again!' commanded the Beast.

Alostrael promptly had intercourse with Aiwass (Set or Satan) that He may incarnate in our next Bastard' (i.e. Crowley and Leah's next child would be Aiwass incarnated).

And so on, through the night, until the early hours.

Sometimes the crystal was dispensed with. The Beast lay on his back, the stem of his long Chinese opium pipe in his mouth, and gazed into the darkness. After a while he would pass the pipe to Leah. 'For Lust's sake, let us lust, for Smoke's sake, let us smoke!'

Somnolently she told him what she saw. 'Outlines . . . birds, flowers, wheat in sheaves, stars, lamps, et cetera.'

'Their colour?' asked the Beast.

'Yellow . . . and blue, the blue predominating, brighter than the yellow which fades away.'

'Invoke Aiwass,' he urged.

She pronounced the sacred name of Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, and with her free hand made the sign of the Cabbalistic Cross.

The vision grew cloudy; in place of birds and foliage came landscapes, buildings, a palace, a whole town with red roofs.

'Reject everything but Aiwass,' instructed the Beast.

Ruins appeared and in the middle of them a long passage leading to a door; then the mighty arm of Aiwass swept across the vision, hurling everything away till nothing remained but this enormous swinging arm.

'Is this His message?' asked Crowley.

'His left eye appears... like a Tibetan mandala, all colours, dazzling. Amid the concentric rings is the pupil of azure light,' said Leah. 'It turns into a flower, the eternal lotus; then a radiant blue cross and within it, a circle.'

'How do you know it is Aiwass?'

A black hand was the answer, the nails long and pointed, the fingers bejewelled; this was like Crowley's own vision of Aiwass. Next, a golden rose of four petals.

'Give me a word!' cried the Beast.

'Sen...' Leah paused. Her eyes stared glassily into space. 'Yen.'

The huge arm began to swing again, in broader and slower strokes. Now the Seeress was lost in Aiwass's eye and could see over all the water...

On the whole, the summer of 1920 passed for the Thelemites successfully and without too many worries and upsets. Sometimes during those days and nights, the Beast reached heights of Dionysian intensity, ran screaming into the temple, 'went all but insane'. He vibrated the god-names, bellowed the barbarous names, and shrieked the spells (mantras), and in an ecstasy performed acts of sexual magic for greatly desired ends. His succinct and curious explanation of these frenzied performances is not inaccurate: 'The cudgel of Jolly Priapus beat me about the head and drove me mad.'

And so it went on, the cries from the *Collegium ad Spiritum* Sanctum startling passers-by, Sicilian peasants who crossed themselves and hurried home.

There is no mention in *The Magical Record of the Beast 666* of Jane Wolfe's becoming the Third Concubine of the Beast. Had it happened, it would, assuredly, have been recorded in the usual detail. It was just as well, for jealousy between Concubines 1 and 2 continued unabated or simmered gently in spite of the corollary to the thelemic law, *Love is the law, love under will*. Alostrael was jealous of any other woman the Beast cast his eye upon. He recorded that she 'flamed up into mania' when she caught him looking a little too closely upon a Sicilian woman. (Ninette also had cause of complaint, judging from a mention, in the Beast's diary, of her threatening him with a revolver.)

The good astrological aspects changed unhurriedly but unfailingly into bad. Apart from anything else, Poupée was still very ill. And Crowley, in spite of bathing and hill-climbing, was not in good health himself; there are too many references to his vomiting, insomnia, lassitude. He summed it all up by saying that he was upon his cross, but it was 'a senseless pain that purges not, that warns not'. And sometimes even cocaine and heroin (supplied by the dope peddler, Amatore, in Palermo) failed to drag

him out of his sickness and depression.

Poupée was transferred to the hospital in Palermo; she was very sick indeed. After consulting the Yi King, Crowley decided to go to her. Leah was at the hospital already. 'I think it may be her Will to die; as when I thought I would do Magick for her, I couldn't,' he entered in his diary. He was referring to an act of *ex-magic which he had performed with Leah with the object, To help Poupée. But during the middle of the operation, he had grown apprehensive and had broken off.

The next day, 12 October, he described as his saddest birthday – he was forty-five – and he went back to Cefalu and tried to overcome his depression by painting. On the 14th, while at work on his 'Dead Emperor' picture, Alostrael returned from Palermo with a bent, sad head: Poupée had died that morning.

The Beast was crushed. Alas, he was born in the old aeon, the Christian aeon, the aeon of suffering and death (in contradistinction to the aeon which he himself had founded, the aeon of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty); and in spite of his Godhead,

I The explanation is probably simple: from her photograph, taken at the Abbey, Jane Wolfe looks like a sturdy, middle-aged lesbian.

he was only 'human, all too human'. He led the weeping Leah into the temple, where he waved his magic wand and struck his magic bell as he blessed his baby's departed spirit; then he wrote these quaint, sad words in the Abbey's *Record*.

On the fourteenth day of October, 1920, era vulgari, ⊙ being in 21° of and) in 20 of m, did Anne Leah, or Poupée, the first bastard of The Beast and of Alostrael, depart from the City of Panormus, going upon Her Way, so that Her bodily veils were no more seen of us by our bodily sense. Well may She steer Her ship amid Her sister stars over the seas of space!

To them whose flesh She had borrowed, in their mortality not understanding, came agony beyond all word most fearful, so that in silence they supported Time and its Burthen of Woe.

Alostrael was ill (she had miscarried six days after the death of Poupée), the Beast covered in boils and generally rather low so that 'the Great Work was hindered, and the hearts of all assailed most sorely, even by fear, bewilderment, doubt, and distrust', to quote again from the Abbey's *Record*. Events of this nature were not interpreted as bad luck, least of all as due to their own neglect. If the gods, or the Secret Chiefs, had not decided against them, how could these events have happened?

The death of her child and her miscarriage of 'a man child in the third month of gestation' seem to have driven Alostrael temporarily insane. Her long-standing distrust and jealousy of Sister Cypris erupted again with greater force than ever. Leah had lost her children, the born and the unborn; the little Frenchwoman still had hers - Cypris was in her eighth month of pregnancy. For a fortnight, Leah argued with the Beast that it was all Ninette's doing - she had worked witchcraft against the Virgin Guardian of the Sangraal. The Beast picked up Cypris's diary and began reading recent entries. Crowley seems to have been unduly sensitive to the obscenities of others. The contents of Cypris's mind were not new to him. In Fontainebleau he had been amazed at the revelations in her diary. Now he was appalled for the second time. The horrors of the human heart overwhelmed him. He had never dreamed that such things were possible; he felt physically sick; he was convinced at last.

He went into the temple and started exorcising the hostile forces through which Cypris had worked her evil, and burnt assafoetida as a final argument against the malevolent powers. Then he gave a copy of the Exorcism to the culprit.

NINETTE FRAUX. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Initiation purges. There is excreted a stench and a pestilence. In your case two have been killed outright, and the rest made ill. There are signs that the process may lead to purification and things made safe within a short time. But we cannot risk further damage; if the hate is still in course, it had better coil back on its source. Keep your diary going carefully. Go and live in Cefalu alone; go to the hospital alone; the day before you come out send up your diary, and I will reconsider things. I shall hope to see the ulcers healing. Do not answer this; simply do as I say. Love is the law, love under will.

The Beast 666.

And an old peasant woman who lived near by led Sister Cypris away. After she had gone, the Beast took up the *Record* from the altar, and in his sprawling handwriting added another couple of pages.

Now then at last upon the fifth day of November, 1920, era vulgari, \odot being in 13° of \mathfrak{M} and \mathfrak{d} in 11° of \mathfrak{M} , did The Beast hearken to the Words of Alostrael His Concubine, perceiving clearly the Magical Need of making sure the circle against the Horror that had invaded it to such most cruel and deadly purpose; Wherefore with Wisdom of Tahuti did he conjure, exorcise and expel the aforesaid Ninette Fraux, casting her out from the Abbey for a season. And this Work not in hate nor in fear but in love and in pity did he do, seeing that solitude purgeth the Soul by forcing it to feed on its own poisons.

On 21 November, Cecil Fredrick Russell, a young man who during the war had been a naval hospital attendant, arrived at the Abbey. In 1917, he had bought a copy of *The International* and read one of the articles in the series 'The Revival of Magick' by the Master Therion. He wrote to this Master Therion who sent him (for \$10) several of his books. In June 1918 he met Crowley in New York. 'I saw him at his apartment then on West 9th St in New York City. He answered my knock with a hypnotic stare & made an appointment for lunch. I remained most of the day; we took an astral journey together & in the evening he & some others . . . initiated me into the 3° of O.T.O.' Crowley praised highly Russell's intellectual attainments, and added some libellous remarks which made Kenneth Grant and me decided, in the light of the rumour that Russell was alive still, to change his name to

Godwin.¹ We need not have bothered. Mr Russell was not at all angry about the account of his having injected himself with 40 grains of cocaine, and about his trying to set a piece of glass on fire by the strength of his will. As for the statement that the naval surgeons managed to save his life, Mr Russell comments in his Znuz is Znees, Memoirs of a Magician, privately published, 1970:

Nonsense! There was only one, my friend Dr P, who refused to accept the manufactured evidence of an iodine spot on my right arm but kindly consented to cooperate by signing me to the hospital (he did nothing else – not even to make an injection of morphine) where I had a ball with the nurses in an isolation ward waiting for my discharge which was the purpose of the whole scheme. The war was over; as was my custom I had reached the top grade I could get in the foreseeable future. I had served my country well – out of the hundreds of flu patients in my charge I lost only one, I labored hard while my superiors slept. . . .

Because of his great interest in magic, Russell had proposed to the Beast that he work with him. In 1918, that was not possible, but now there was a vacant post for him, that of 'an High Priest of Thelema in the Abbey where The Beast hath His sojourn'; and shortly after his arrival, Russell took the oath of the A : A : and the magical name of Genesthai '[the flowers] that are coming into being.'

Crowley sneered at Russell's experiments with Our Lady's Breath (ether), his habit of saying 'God damn' at infrequent intervals, and his coarse laughter at 'lascivious suggestions'. To the outward eye, that is to say to Crowley's outward eye, Genesthai was a drunken sailor boy who wanted 'Pure Love, seventeen years old with real gold hair and a guaranteed blush'. In a word, Russell was a kind of Jude the Obscure, even 'a potential Saint in the bodily guise of a Hooligan'. It was up to the Holy Guru to work upon the outer husk of vulgarity; and the Beast began to lecture Russell on art, literature, and manners.

The 'lascivious suggestions' had been made of course by Crowley who, from the start, had taken a strong magical liking to Genesthai. The Beast, as he frankly declares in his *Magical Record*, was determined to seduce him, although he declared at the same time that Genesthai disgusted him sexually and he suspected that the disgust was mutual.

1 In The Confessions.

Alostrael was already in Palermo. He set forth with a light step and began the Orgia (as he called this very important series of sex-magical operations) with Leah in the Hotel de France. The following day, Genesthai participated, but the rite was not successful for Russell's heart was not in these XI° operations. On their return to the Abbey two days later, they had lunch; then the least shaved and painted his face and sent for Brother Genesthai to continue the Orgia.

Now I'll shave and make up my face like the lowest kind of whore, and rub on perfume, and go after Genesthai like a drunken two-bit prick-pit in old New Orleans . . . Opus V. Fra. Genesthai in ano meo. Operation, very lengthy. Alostrael had to masturbate Genesthai to effect erection, and her hand introduced his penis into my anus. Orgasm very strong and savage. Elixir, nearly all absorbed; Alostrael, to whom I offered it, could only get a few drops.

The object of this magical operation – and all sexual magic has an object outside the act, otherwise it would not be magic, merely was to establish the Law of Thelema. Crowley literally wore himself out in acts which had as their object the establishing of the Law of Do What Thou Wilt. At the culminating and concluding point of Opus V, Crowley, beside himself with lust, cried out in a loud clear voice, slowly and firmly, To establish the Law of Thelema. Genesthai's comment on this operation is printed in Volume Two of *Znuz is Znees*, 1970:

What really happened, my dear Master Therion, in this case, your Circean enchantment didn't give me a bone-on – add that Ethyl Ether is no aphrodisiac – you were in bed between me & the Virgin (sic) Guardian of the Sangraal who had to lean over you to do what she did & you played down in the Record – in fact more than merely to shake the hand of a stranger faire gonfler son andouille.

1 From a thelemic point of view, to say that someone was 'beside himself with lust' is not a criticism and no moral disapproval would be implied by such a remark

18 THE IPSISSIMUS

CROWLEY began the new year with a despairing cry: 'The financial position is desperate, a promise to pay in \$1,500 having completely collapsed. What shall I do?' The Yi King advised him to retire. On this he commented, 'Sleep take me! Death, take me! This life is too full; it pains, it slays, it suffices.'

His original fortune of £17,000 had been, of course, truly, if not well, spent. He had also spent three sums of £1,000 each, left him by three aunts who died, it seems, within a short time of one another. This £3,000 he probably collected on his return from America; it was the money with which he rented the house in Fontainebleau and started the Abbey.

A few days later these problems had subsided before that of Crowleyising mankind. Puffing his opium pipe, he invoked Aiwass by the ritual of the Bornless One (see page 159). How should he put over the Law of Thelema? That was his question to his Holy Guardian Angel.

Aiwass answered through the medium of a dream: two huge quadrangles, countless people in them. Aleister Crowley said something he had to say, very loud, attracting everyone's attention. Immense applause which was repeated in the far court. 'Then into that court came the assent of a sort of Headmaster person; all applauded him, and so it came back to me. Moral: make yourself heard and say plainly what you want!'

He decided to try his luck in Paris for a while and marked

1 February as the date of his departure.

He could not understand why his labours failed financially, and asked the *Yi King*, the unfailing Chinese Oracle, to explain it to him.

'What is the cause of my general failure to make a business success of my work?'

'The business is too big for its organization.'

'What will enable me to establish my work on a satisfactory business footing?'

'Some sudden event.'

'Of what type will be this event?'

'A woman.'

'What relations am I to have with this woman?'

'Marriage.'

'Describe the woman.'

'Wealthy, frank, passionate, impulsive, hot-tempered, impatient, cruel, possibly has known disgrace.'

'By what means do I meet her?'

'In connection with some secret or difficult matter.'

'Describe the place of the meeting.'

'During your journey to Paris. Possibly in the house of an intellectual acquaintance but it might be in a wood.'

Finally, Crowley asked the *Yi King* for a symbol for the fate of his work in the world during the next five years, and received the answer: 'Sudden rise to fame, though starting slowly.'

The flow of events in *The Magical Record* suddenly stops and does not begin again until two months later when the Beast returned, brideless, to his Abbey, sweating up the mountain path, after a fruitless sojourn in the city of Lutetia.

I have been living a spineless life, on my nerves; spasmodic activities, some very good, others sheer hysteria. I have not even recorded the Operations of the Gnosis [acts of sex-magic]. I leave tomorrow for Paris. My diary will be in the 0° until I arrive and get a decent book to write in and a pen that works and ink that ink.'

He left Leah in charge of the Abbey and imposed a vow of allence upon everybody during his absence (certain circumstances excepting); kissed the children good-bye; enjoined Concubines 1 and 2 (Sister Cypris with her baby had been readmitted to the Abbey) not to come to blows, and off he went.

Upon his arrival in Paris, he bought a little book of rag paper, bound in red morocco, in which to record briefly his main activities: acts of sex-magic, oaths, the Yi King (questions and answers), names of people he met, where he had arrived at, where he was actting off to, obiter dicta, and so on. His name and status are inscribed on the first page:

6 6 6 TO MEΓA ΘΗΡΙΟΝ The Beast

O Alastor de Kerval
Grand Master of the Knights
of the Holy Ghost
The Wanderer of the Waste
ΛΟΓΟΣ ΑΙΩΝΟΣ
An[no] XVI ⊙ in ∞

There were too many geniuses in Paris already for Crowley to be conspicuous among them. The anxieties of the war had passed into the excesses of the peace. A urinal wall bowl entitled 'Fountain',¹ amid other curiosities, was shown at a public art exhibition. The world had never seen anything so amazing. The Russian ballet and Russian bolshevism, psychoanalysis, dadaism, were the new currents everyone wanted to talk about, not the Great Revelation in Cairo and the divinity of Aleister Crowley.

Among the crowd of acquaintances the Beast made this February in Paris were Mary Butts, English novelist and short-story writer, her friend Cecil Maitland, and the eldest sister of Ninette Shumway, Helen, all of whom put down their names for a pilgrimage to the Abbey. He observed that 'Homosexuality is an infirmity', and two days later he himself expressed this infirmity with his Paris lover, Camille; he played, as usual, the passive part.

He ran into Nina Hammett who introduced him to that talented man, J. W. N. Sullivan, and his wife, Sylvia. Sullivan, whose main interests were music and science, was drawn to the Beast. They played chess together; Crowley expounded, with evident success, *The Book of the Law*; they chatted and argued all night. In the end, the Beast extracted a promise from Sullivan that he would do his best to discover his True Will.

I, J. W. N. Sullivan, in the presence of The Beast 666, solemnly pledge myself to the Great Work: which is, to discover my own True Will and to do it.

Love is the Law, love under Will.

Witness my hand, J. W. N. Sullivan.

Crowley produced before the Sullivans such a vortex of intellectual and sexual attraction that on the very next page to the one which contains the oath of the husband is recorded the Beast's act of sex-magic with the wife. Sullivan had been sent south in pursuit of his True Will, leaving his wife behind; she followed a few days later.

There are other names in the record of these two months in Paris and Fontainebleau, of people with whom the Beast performed his magic, but to give a list of them would be meaningless, for some of them were prostitutes, the rest unknown.

On 6 April, he returned to Cefalu, bringing back with him the leeches of boredom and inactivity that he had taken away with

1 By Marcel Duchamp, 1915. Described as 'Ready-made'.

him. His first act of sex-magic with Alostrael on his home-coming had as its object 'Physical well being for both'. He noted with approval that Alostrael, while he had been away, had 'cured herself almost completely by three Opera with Baron Le Calee'. The baron was, presumably, a local grandee who had strolled up to the Abbey and stayed a night or two.

He blamed the cold and the damp of the winter at Cefalu, and of his last fortnight in Paris, and of the last three weeks since his return from Paris, for his almost uninterrupted use of heroin, without which, he said, he would have had to take to his bed, and with which he had been able to do quite a bit of work. At the same time he said that he was about at the end of his tether where work was concerned. 'It becomes more and more difficult to force myself to do anything . . . To record my own thought it is enough to say "Wow!" or to keep silent.'

And the financial position was still desperate. In a word, his solourn in the city of Lutetia for two months, and his many acts of sexual magic there, had improved nothing.

Yesterday I resolved to use no heroin after 11 a.m. At night I suffered intensely with nervous pain and insomnia; but I stuck to it, and after a nightmare or two, got a good night's rest. In the morning I was subject to great weakness and some dyspnoea, which disappeared instantly on a dose of heroin at 10.30 a.m., thus indicating that the symptoms were due to the abstention.

He shuffled the Yi King sticks. What course should he take to rid himself of the 'tendency to the habit'? By Will-Power came the answer.

The rest of this stretch of *The Magical Record* is like the chart of a hospital patient: he can't sleep, he can't eat, he can't breathe, his bowels won't stir, and he hasn't any money. The position seems so hopeless that even that remedy of the doctor in *Gil Blas*, who got rid of his patient's illness by getting rid of his life, could be counted a blessing.

Each morning he dragged himself out of bed and began painting. Work is a latent prayer and there was so much work to do. Slowly his courage and energy returned; his constipation was changed to diarrhoea, and his inactivity replaced by an orgy of painting. He went for long walks amid the hills, shying away from the phantom of heroin. He decided that, in withdrawing a drug, it is less important to reduce its quantity than to break up 'the

physiological cycle' by increasing the periods of abstention. When he was tired of painting and walking, he took a broom and swept the floor of the temple.

While he painted, he thought of Gauguin; he identified himself with Gauguin to such an extent that he said that he was 'literally' tormented by him. Like Gauguin, he had chosen exile rather than tolerate the bourgeois, and covered the walls of his house with the splendours of his vision. And he too had taken up painting only late in life. Finally, he noted that the French painter had been a High Initiate who saw and heard an undine by day in the open.

Gauguin had not died till 8 May 1903, that is six months after Crowley had met Rodin. Why, he could have known Gauguin. And raising his hands up to the sun, the Beast offered his body, 'well consecrated by years of intimate union with black, brown and yellow men and women', to Gauguin's manes, his departed spirit, should he need a vehicle of flesh for further expression.

So, by the Power and Authority invested in Me, I, Baphomet 729, ordain the insertion of the name of PAUL GAUGUIN

among the more memorable saints in the Gnostic Mass. Baphomet XI°2 O.T.O.

I.I. et O.B.3

He was greatly impressed by the fact that Gauguin had painted the whole house. What genius! Had he painted the furniture as well? It is easy enough to paint a wall to look like a jungle, but can one paint the toilet-table to look like a python?

The harmony will be found by making the whole house a perfect expression of myself; the style will be the common factor. There is no reason for crying contradiction when one compares one part of me, fighting my way up the glazed rocks on the Meije⁴ in a hurricane, with another, smoking opium between

1 The letters of the name Baphomet add up to 729.

2 'The X° is merely honorary,' said Crowley, 'but recent researches into the mysteries of the IX° have compelled me to add an XI°.' The sexual secrets of the OTO are taught to IX° members; it is magical work with the opposite sex. Crowley, on his own initiative, added an XI° (or IX° reversed) for homosexual workings; autosexual work is VIII°. Crowley practised all three.

3 Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains [that are in the Sanctuary of the Gnosis].

4 In the French Alps.

my negro lover and my monied mistress, in my Charvet pyjamas. My soul shall sing a thousand songs which are one song; my house shall be a mirror.

The Beast meditated on his canvases.

Suppose one of my pictures cocked a snook at me? Suppose it said, 'I can paint as well as you can, and I don't give a hoot'? I should be pleased with such spirited conduct; if I were capable of feeling insulted or jealous, and of inflicting some spiteful injury on my creation, I could never have created it . . .

Each painting reveals an unknown part of me to myself; I

gain real knowledge through my art . . .

Art is a God's way of discovering his own mysteries, the most enthralling, most tireless of pleasures. We are all, each one of us sovereign and unique, parts of God; but we are not rubberstamp signatures of the Ineffable Name. We are God's poems, due to inspiration, his children, begotten in his love-madness; and we should not be of Him and His nature if we were not ourselves capable of inspiration and of ecstasy, free to soar and to sweep . . .

And the man who makes idiotic jokes and devises obscene cruelties proves himself of the seed of the God who filled the Universe with these forms of amusement. And 'Blasphemy' which is the Indignation of the Created at his Creator, is the Proof that the Created is a live and independent Being, fulfilling the true purpose of that Creator. Therefore, of all acts, Blasphemy is the most pleasing to God.

He had a strong presentiment that something untoward and disastrous was about to happen. Things could not go on like this indefinitely. The activity of the Abbey had grown into a routine, but one of indifference instead of discipline. He urged that everyone should pull himself together and cast off sloth. They must all begin their magical work again and keep things up to standard, not just dart into the temple for an invocation or an oath when they felt like it. What did the *Yi King* say?

The answer was that they had come to the end of a cycle. The restrictions they were meeting were of brute fact, beneath which their ideal was squashed. It was not a case of 'we want money and where the devil can we find it?' but of 'we must prove that it is possible to start with no assets beyond our own naked, bodily, mental and moral qualities.'

In the end, Crowley had to stare the brute facts a little more

closely in the face. They had not enough money to run the Abbey; they had better, therefore, earn some. But how? The Beast himself was the weakest link in the chain, having no experience whatsoever of earning a living or of doing any work, 'though my ingenuity enables me to find a fairly good way of getting anything done when I want it done'. Alostrael was completely and hopelessly incompetent, but 'capable of unusual endurance'. Jane Wolfe had no private bank balance to offer the Beast; he took rather a poor view of her financial qualifications. And as for Frater Genesthai, although physically strong, and with experience of various jobs, such as typist, waiter, hospital attendant, he failed 'to make such work his magical formula'. In plain, he was no good either when it came to raising the wind. Finally, Sister Cypris - poor, hardworking, now thoroughlybroken-in Ninette Shumway - well, she had her baby to look after.

The Yi King was consulted again on this question. The second half of the answer was puzzling. Each, it said, should work strictly according to his own nature, and reap where he has not sown.

'Does this suggest we should become Robber Barons?' queried the Beast.

The sun entered the sign of Gemini and in celebration of this event, the Beast and his Scarlet Woman, Alostrael, performed a Work of the Gnosis to release the magical power of Babalon. He described the orgasm as continuous for many minutes, 'complete without being completed. Indescribable – a new experience.' The details reveal that the rite was a parody of the Christian sacrament of Holy Communion.

The whole of the following day he worked with Jane at painting on the large wall of his bedroom. He described the work thus:

It represents Our Lord Aiwaz¹ coming to the world, presenting 666² and 31-666-31³ to it. On his right is the Demon of Double Wisdom, a combination of Owl and Ibis, and on his left the Angel of Triple Folly, composed of Serpent, Lobster and Goat. One is Night, Silence, Meditation, the other Life, Lust, Luxury, and Labour. Saturn, Luna and a comet are in the sky.

1 Aiwass or Aiwaz, Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, the spelling depending upon the nature of the work the Beast was doing at the time, whether magical (Aiwass) or mystical (Aiwaz).

2 The Beast. 3 Alostrael.

And the next day, too, he worked at the wall. 'It is nearly done. But my intensity of application is like desperation, it acts as an anaesthetic. I am being slowly killed by the python of poverty. My strength is being sapped by the knowledge that what I do is useless.'

In this mood he reviewed yet again the situation, beginning with the question, Who am I? Yes, who was he? The answer – and he did not this time ask the Yi King – was that he was a Magus, and that his oath as Magus was to speak to mankind. He could not, he must not, enjoy his Silence. He was in the Bonds of the Brotherhood of the A:A:, the same inner or secret church that Eckartshausen had indicated in his The Cloud upon the Sanctuary. The simple truth was that he had done much, yes, more than any man had done for many centuries. 'For it has been given me to utter a Word¹ whose virtue is to impose a new Law, a new Magical Formula,² upon the World; and I have the witness of my worst enemies themselves that my work has had more influence on initiated thought than that of any one else in my generation. So mighty among men is even my failure.'

Yes, he had fought the good fight, and accomplished part of the Great Work, so why now let the sword slip from his hand?

It was the Seventeenth Year of the Aeon, that is the seventeenth year since the Great Revelation in Cairo, or 1921 *era vulgari*. He had nothing to regret, nothing to fear; for he was in the hands of the gods. If they willed him to live and to continue the Great Work – so mote it be!

He undressed and entered the temple, followed by Alostrael. He was going to take the Oath of Ipsissimus, the highest possible Grade in the whole hierarchy of the Great White Brotherhood of Light, a stage beyond the gods, beyond all mental concepts.

He was afraid of what he was about to do, lest it call forth home insane act to prove his power to act without attachment'.

He braced himself for the deed: to stand squarely before the phantom of his own defying and deriding self and announce that he, even he, was by insight and initiation The Ipsissimus ('his own very self').

I am by insight and initiation an Ipsissimus; I'll face the phantom of myself, and tell it so to its teeth. I will invoke Insanity itself; but having thought the Truth, I will not flinch from fixing it in word and deed, whatever come of it.

1 Thelema. 2 Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

9.34 p.m. As a God goes, I go.

10.05. I am back at my desk, having done the deed, before the Scarlet Woman as my witness. I swore to keep silence, so long as I live, about the fact of my attainment. (The Scarlet Woman is not thus bound, of course).

Having taken the oath, he described himself as in Samadhi, ecstasy, the state of highest bliss, detachment, and enlightenment. He was 'nameless nature', Hegel's pure being, and like Hegel's pure being, he contained within himself the Absolute. There is nothing higher; there is nothing more. Crowley had surpassed God Himself.

Being an Ipsissimus was useful to this extent: it enabled him, four weeks later, to get for a moment an objective view of himself.

I am myself a physical coward, but I have exposed myself to every form of disease, accident, and violence; I am dainty and delicate, but I have driven myself to delight in dirty and disgusting debauches, and to devour human excrements and human flesh. I am at this moment defying the power of drugs to disturb my destiny and divert my body from its duty. I am also a mental and moral weakling, whose boyhood training was so horrible that its result was that my will wholly summed up in hatred of all restraint, whose early manhood, untrained, left my mind and animal soul like an elephant in rut broken out of the stockade. Yet I have mastered every mode of my mind, and made myself a morality more severe than any other in the world if only by virtue of its absolute freedom from any code of conduct.

19 CAKES OF LIGHT FOR MARY BUTTS

At the end of June 1921, Mary Butts and Cecil Maitland, accepting Crowley's invitation, arrived at the Abbey. The Beast's savage pen described Mary, who was then twenty-eight years old, as 'a fat, bold, red-headed slut... a white maggot. She was pompous, pretentious, and stupid. She gave herself out as a great authority on literature; but all her knowledge was parrot, and her own attempts in that direction the most deplorable dreary drivel that ever had been printed.'

For Cecil, he felt slightly less aversion; after a long diatribe on his appearance and character, the Beast examined him under the magnifying glass of philosophy and classified him with Victor Neuburg. 'The great value of such men as Maitland and Neuburg to me has been to strengthen my conviction that in the absence of will-power the most complete collection of virtues and talents is wholly worthless.'

The day following his arrival, Cecil went for a swim in the bay (the Caldara) with the Beast, who seems to have tried his best to drown him. He saved his life by climbing the rough rocks to the cliff top, losing only portions of his skin. The Knight Guardian of the Sacred Lance described him as bleeding all over by the time he regained his clothes. The next day, the ceremony of preparing the Cakes of Light took place.

All the Thelemites, except Sister Metonith, who was in her yoga trance in her sandy cave, were assembled in the brilliant sunshine on the hillside. The horoscope and the Yi King had been cast and consulted and both had given their blessing. The Beast was draped from head to foot in a robe of black and crimson, a dagger in his hand. Firstly, the Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram was performed; then a young cock was brought into the magic circle to be baptised Peter Paul by Maitland.

A précis of the ceremony is given in Crowley's *Magical Record*. 2.00 pm. The ceremony of preparing the Cakes of Light. A

1 The recipe for the Cakes of Light is in *The Book of the Law:* 'The best blood is of the moon, monthly: then the fresh blood of a child, or dropping from the host of heaven: then of enemies; then of the priest or of the worshippers: last of some beast, no matter what. This burn: of this make cakes & eat into me.' The 'host of heaven' is the stars. The

young cock is to be baptized *Peter Paul* into the Catholic Church by C. J. A. Maitland, the son of an apostate Romish Priest, and therefore the ideal 'Black' Hierophant. Mary Butts and I are its sponsors. Peter and Paul are the founders of the Christian Church, and we want its blood to found our own church.

Alostrael then dances against the will of Mary, on my swearing to give to her the half of my Kingdom. She demands P.P.'s

head on the Disk.

I behead him, and the blood is caught in the silver 'charger' on the Disk. In this charger is the meal &c. for the Cakes of Light, ready except for the blood.

I conjure the spirit of P.P. to serve these Cakes to found our

Church with, as we may use them.

The cock is slain in honour of Ra-Hoor-Khuit, who is invoked before the killing.

This ceremony lasted over two hours. It was Mary Butt's and Cecil Maitland's introduction to the religious life of the Abbey, and a spectacle which drew the presence of a number of local inhabitants, to Crowley's embarrassment. Mary and her lover both took the Oath of Affiliate and signed the Abbey's record.

During the following month, Sir Frank Bennett, VII° O.T.O., put ashore at Palermo and came on to Cefalu, seeking initiation and higher instruction under the personal guidance of the holy

leader of the Order of Thelemites.

Crowley called Bennett a 'working-man'. He was, in fact, a Lancashire bricklayer who, some time before 1914, had emigrated to Australia; but in 1909, while still in England, he had got in touch with Crowley, through *The Equinox*, to ask his advice on the practice of Abra-Melin magic. One of Bennett's reasons for taking up magic was to get rid of pains in the head, and to silence the mysterious voices he heard. Crowley had advised him to begin and end each (Abra-Melin) meditation with the banishing rituals of the Hexagram and the Pentagram; to use the god-form of

Cakes of Light were the 'Host' in the Eucharist of the new religion of Crowleyanity. Thus Crowley wrote in his *Magical Record of the Beast* (5 July 1920), 'In my Mass the Host is of excrement, that I can consume in awe and adoration.' Mary Butts declined this so-called host when Crowley offered it to her. The incident is the source of her remark that when she arrived at the Abbey, Crowley offered her 'a goat's turd on a plate'.

Harpocrates (a means of protecting oneself from outside influences); to do less reading and more gardening.

Bennett was a member of Crowley's A∴A∴ and had taken the magical name of Progradior (better Progredior), 'I advance'. He was also a knight of the Order of Oriental Templars which was under the authority of Baphomet; hence his title. He had written to Crowley from Australia, and Crowley had invited him to Cefalu where, Crowley said, he could hardly fail to benefit from the rigid and intense course of initiation which he would devise for him. As an additional encouragement, Crowley said that he had successfully fried the seeds of Jane Wolfe's ego.

Bennett, aged fifty-five, arrived at Cefalu on 17 July 1921, and caused a slight contretemps in the Abbey, for where was Sir Frank to sleep? An additional building had been acquired (called 'Under the Hill' in honour of Aubrey Beardsley; also 'Ad Umbilicum', as it was the children's nursery) but accommodation was still insufficient for the friends and followers of the Beast who were

now crowding to the Abbey.

Brother Progradior was Brother Genesthai's superior both in age and rank, and therefore it was only right – even good manners – that Genesthai should, temporarily, give up his room to him. But Genesthai thought otherwise, for how could he carry on the Great Work without a private room for study and meditation? And according to Crowley he retired in a sulking fit. 'I pointed out quite kindly,' wrote the head of the Abbey, 'the various considerations which applied. I might as well have talked to a turnip – better in fact for a turnip's eyes would not have got bloodshot, nor swollen with blood almost to bursting.'

The tension increased. Sister Metonith, who had returned from her Great Magical Retirement, offered her room; she would, if necessary, go on another Magical Retirement, but Crowley

rightly refused to accept this solution.

In the end, the Beast picked up a towel and told Brother Genesthai that his work did not matter a tinker's cuss and that he had better be out of his room by the time he, Crowley, had returned from his bathe.

The Beast came back from his swim and, finding Genesthai still adamant, retired to his room to ponder the situation. Finally, in his wisdom, he decided that it would be of enormous advantage to Genesthai's health if he took a holiday from the Abbey. He thought of Palermo. Genesthai had been working too hard recently and he was quite anxious about him.

¹ The active aspect of Horus.

The idea was proposed and immediately interpreted by Genesthai as a banishment; and in a rage and provisionless, he hurried up to the top of the nearby peak, called the Rock. Sister Cypris, going outside the Abbey, and shading the sun from her eyes, could see him, pacing backwards and forwards 'like the possessed of Gadara among the tombs', as Crowley put it. She felt so sorry for him; she preferred him to all the rest. And she begged the Beast to intervene, urging that Genesthai was irresponsible, that he was just a child who would behave differently if treated gently. But Crowley, although moved by her appeal, remained firm. He would do nothing; he had said all he had to say. At most, he would not prohibit any assistance Cypris might care to give him. 'Let him come down,' said the Knight Guardian of the Sacred Lance. 'He's up there by no will of mine. Whenever he chooses he can come down and eat and drink, and sit with us, clothed and in his right mind.'

So Sister Cypris, the Second Concubine of the Beast, somewhat neglected of late, filled a rucksack with food and drink and dragged herself up the sweltering slopes to a ruined stone hut which Genesthai had made his headquarters.

Crowley said that he refused to speak to her but accepted the water she offered.

The next day saw the end of the drama. The Beast, who was dozing on a sofa by the main door of the Abbey, was awakened by the hurried entrance of Genesthai. 'His appearance really alarmed me; unshaven, unwashed... He flung a rucksack on the floor at my feet and roared out "Aleister Crowley"... He then went off as suddenly and strangely as he had come. When I saw him next he was himself again, merely showing signs of exhaustion.' The rucksack contained Genesthai's magical record, described by Crowley as 'an incoherent jumble of crazy and violent cries', a diary of hatred against the Beast and his Whore, the Scarlet Woman. The rest of Crowley's account of Brother Genesthai is sheer abuse; but in conflicts of this kind Crowley rarely blamed himself.

Our relations ended, bar occasional correspondence, towards the end of the year, when he left us to go to Australia avowedly to help Frater Progradior in establishing the Law. However, he only stayed a short time in Sydney, and went on to San Francisco, where, free from all guidance or control, he broke out into a series of spasms of which I do not know the details and which are of little interest as being merely casual symptoms of a state of mind which I had already studied sufficiently.

These were Crowley's last words on Frater Genesthai. The Beast had expected much from Genesthai, even that he would become his Magical Son, and continue the Great Work after the satyrs had joyously carried him off into the Underworld. In Genesthai, he thought he had found a Great Adept. 'Come brother mine in the One Order, elect thy brow as mine to bear the Silver Star!' He was genuinely sorry that it had all ended so dismally. In point of fact, Brother Genesthai lived up to his motto, and in due course established in California a magical society, of which he is the head.

In one of his letters, Crowley wrote, 'I was at this time much absorbed in my more serious work of curing deep-seated psychoses...'

The time was 1921 and the 'psychosis' that Crowley had been mainly thinking of was Bennett's. When he came to describe these events in his *Confessions*, he admitted that he had failed with Brother Genesthai but, he said, Brother Progradior stood in brilliant contrast. His success with him was enough to wipe out a dozen failures.

Crowley cured psychoses and neuroses in this wise. He saw that the mind or psyche was divided into a conscious and subconscious level; that was part of the occult tradition. The notion of the subconsciousness as a dynamic and disturbing force he took from Freud, without any acknowledgement. It would have been difficult for Crowley to have made this acknowledgement in the light of his belief in himself as the greatest living psychologist.

It followed that a psychotic or a neurotic was one whose subconscious mind was out of joint with his conscious mind. Crowley's therapeutic technique, therefore, consisted in flattening out the conscious mind ('frying the seeds of the ego'), and leaving the subconscious mind to fill the gap and provide its own cure, a technique which has something in common with that of his fellow thaumaturge, Gurdjieff.¹

1 In February 1924, Crowley paid a visit to Gurdjieff's Fontainebleau establishment and asked to see the Master, but Gurdjieff was either away or declined to see the Beast 666 who had come, offering to take on those pupils that Gurdjieff had failed with. After his success with Brother Progradior, Crowley was quite confident that he would be able to cure them all, without exception. He was entertained by Major Pindar – 'hell of a fine fellow' – who asked him to stay to dinner. 'Gurdjieff, their prophet, seems a tip-top man. Heard more sense and insight than I've done for years. Pindar dines at 7.30. Oracle for my visit was "There are few men: there are enough". Later, a really wonderful

There was something clearly wrong with Bennett, Crowley said, but he did not know what exactly.

Then, one afternoon, as Crowley, Leah, and Bennett were going for a bathe, and just as they had reached the edge of the cliff above the bay, Crowley made to Sir Frank a casual remark 'which proved a winning shot'. What the remark was, Crowley did not say, but he described the effect. Bennett stopped short and gasped, his eyes starting from his head. A moment later, Crowley was surprised to see him dash down the path, 'like a young goat', tear off his clothes and sprint into the sea.

Progradior never said a word until they had all returned to the road after their swim; then, with a pale face and in awed accents – I follow Crowley's account – he said, 'Please tell me again what you said just now?'

'How the devil should I remember?' replied Crowley.

Bennett asked him to discuss the subject fully; and this Crowley did, but he failed in his account of the episode to say what the subject was, and concluded with the statement that as soon as they had returned to the Abbey, Bennett passed into a trance which lasted three days.

He then came to me looking like an incarnation of pure joy, and told me what had happened. Without knowledge of his need, I had unwittingly given him the key to the inmost treasury of his soul. One minute facet of Truth unveiled from the matrix by the wheel of my Word had let in the light. In three days he had achieved the critical initiation which had baffled him for nearly thirty years.

This is most unsatisfactory: Crowley does not explain what was wrong with Sir Frank, and he leaves us entirely in the dark about the nature of his cure. We are asked to take his word for it, and that is all.

In conformity with the rule of the Abbey, Bennett began to keep a diary or magical record. Fortunately it has been preserved, and thus the nature of Bennett's psychosis, and Crowley's therapy, the 'winning shot', are revealed.

Bennett was due to go on his Magical Retirement, but before this happened, Crowley, who was going for a swim with Leah, asked him to accompany him. Not being a good swimmer, Bennett was not anxious to go, but he consented.

It was a fine, windless morning, and the sea was of the colour of indigo blue, shading to pale green. All three got undressed and, naked, sat for a while in the shade of a rock, enjoying the view of the sea and sky. Suddenly Crowley said to Bennett: 'Progradior, I want to explain to you fully, and in a few words, what initiation means, and what is meant when we talk of the Real Self, and what the Real Self is.'

And there and then Crowley told him that it was all a matter of getting the subconscious mind to work; and when this subconscious mind was allowed full sway, without interference from the conscious mind, then illumination could be said to have begun; for the subconscious mind was our Holy Guardian Angel.

Crowley illustrated the point thus: everything is experienced in the subconscious mind and it (the subconscious) is constantly urging its will on consciousness, and when the inner desires are restricted or suppressed, evil of all kinds is the result.

Crowley went on to say that sex is mankind's most deeply-rooted problem; it starts very early in life and causes the most harm; it is carried with us throughout our lives, and torments most people with the tortures of hell. Sex is centred in the sub-conscious mind and no amount of suppression can keep it down, for it always works its way up again, and in all kinds of ways, such as in dreams and in sickness, and if unsatisfied, will turn one mad or to 'some hellish abortion'.

The explanation of all this, said Crowley, is that the sexual organs are the physical symbol of God and the Sun; they have creative power and therefore, of all parts of the body, they are most like God and nearest to the Holy Guardian Angel.

These notions came as a great surprise to Frank Bennett. He had looked on the subconscious mind only as a receptacle, as it were, of all the knowledge and experience gained in life; and he thought of the Holy Guardian Angel as a kind of super-conscious mind towards whom we had to aspire; it was rather like a climb up the Tree of Life to Tiphereth, the heart of man in the microcosm or the sun in the macrocosm.

In a moment of insight, Brother Progradior saw, as he had never seen before, that it was a matter only of listening to this subconscious mind and of doing what it directs, for one to achieve

evening with Pindar. Gurdjieff clearly a very advanced adept. My chief quarrels are over sex (I doubt whether Pindar understands G's true position) and their punishments, e.g. depriving the offender of a meal or making him stand half an hour with his arms out. Childish and morally valueless' (*The Magical Record of the Beast 666*).

one's True Will, the essence of the teaching of thelema. 'Thus,' concluded Bennett when he came to record this discussion, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law, is TRUE.'

Then all three entered the water. The Beast and his Scarlet Woman went for a good swim, but Progradior, after these revelations, felt faint and could only paddle about near the shore. Crowley's words still rang in his ears and would not leave him for an instant. Soon he came out of the water, got dressed and waited in the shade.

When the Beast had finished his swim and was getting dressed, Bennett asked him to repeat what he had said before entering the water. Reluctantly Crowley did so. Then he fell silent and, with Leah, began to walk back to the Abbey, Bennett following behind with Crowley's words weighing heavily upon him.

Later, Bennett wrote in his magical record with deep emotion that if he had only known all this in the past, he would have saved himself endless trouble and sorrow; instead of which he had been taught the damnable teaching that all these desires were of the flesh and therefore of the devil and must be suppressed, and that man should not have such desires. 'Oh, God, what happiness I have lost through such devilish teaching. I, a perfectly healthy man, doing all I could to suppress these perfectly natural desires, and yet all the time finding that they were always as strong, if not stronger, than ever.'

That night, while drinking coffee, Crowley expounded further his theory of the subconscious mind and its relation to the conscious mind (which in Bennett's account is also referred to as the 'physical' mind). In this theory, Brother Progradior seemed to see 'the whole reason of evolution'. He explained it thus: all is contained, and must be contained, in the 'astral' (the subconscious?), which is an inner body that produces the outer physical body. Bennett concluded his outline of these abstruse ideas with, 'It is so great this knowledge that my head feels as if it would split.'

But he recovered and feeling, as he said, perfectly healthy in body and mind, he bid everyone good-night, and retired to his room at 11.00 pm. He undressed, put on his pyjamas, and got into bed; but he felt no inclination to sleep; then the revolutionary ideas of his Master, the Beast, again began to create turmoil in his mind. The more he tried to shut them out, the more persistent they became, until he again felt that his head was going to burst. This time, the pain became greater, and he literally rolled and

tossed about in agony. He looked at his watch; it was 3.00 am. Everyone in the Abbey was fast asleep. The bed was wet through with sweat. He felt he was suffocating, and got up and leant out of the window for air. To relieve the intense pain in his head, he held it between his hands.

He felt the room was cramping him; not even Crowley's paintings on the walls – one was of pilgrims in the mountains going towards a coral and jade pagoda – made it seem any bigger; he must get some air, otherwise he would go mad.

Still holding his head, which now seemed to have swollen to gleantic proportions, Brother Progradior ran out of the Abbey. With bare feet and in his pyjamas, he walked along a rough path which led up the hill side. He was suffocating and he struggled and fought like a drowning man, but the more he struggled the greater grew the pain in his head. 'I became desperate,' he said, 'and fought like a madman. And it was in this desperate struggle that something within me said, "Breathe deep," which I did, and at once I became much calmer.'

As he grew calm, he became aware that he was wet through with sweat, and that the sharp stones and thorns were hurting his bare feet. Gradually his head became less painful, and it seemed that instead of something breaking out, something inside his head was closing in, and at the same time unfolding.

He returned to the Abbey and quietly re-entered his room. Now his mind was still but 'absolute blackness pervaded my whole being.' He looked at his watch; it was 3.30 am. His delirious wandering about the hillside in the darkness had lasted only half an hour. He fell on to the bed and was soon fast asleep.

When he awoke it was bright daylight. He realized that what Crowley had told him yesterday had been almost too much for him. He felt perplexed and miserable and lay for a long time in bed, brooding upon his life and this new teaching. When he did get up, he felt disinclined to leave his room; so he spent most of the day in it, silent and depressed and unable to concentrate. At 9.30 pm, he went to bed but, as he had expected, the feeling of breathlessness and of his head being several sizes too large came over him again; and all the time he could not prevent the thoughts that rushed upon him.

Later, in his magical diary, he wrote:

What fools we men are! We make for ourselves a prison, and erect mirrors that cover all four walls of this prison; and not being satisfied with this, we cover the ceiling with a mirror as

well. And these [mirrors] are our five senses which reflect themselves in hundreds of forms until we are so befogged that we believe that these reflections of ourselves – of man as Man and Bull – are all that is. But there are a few who have examined these mirrors and polished them, and discovered that the more the mirrors are polished the less reflection they give. Then a time has come when they have found that they are not mirrors at all but only veils, and that one can see through the veils.

The polishing now begins in earnest, and the work turns to ecstasy – the true delight of the five senses which man ever tries to exceed. It is then revealed to him that he is more than Man and Bull; he is Royal Eagle, ever soaring, with the strength of the lion....

I have written this down just as I have perceived it, and it is just as the Beast has told me: that is, it is all on the astral plane.

The whole problem was now so clear to Bennett that he wondered how he had failed to see it before. The subconscious self, which is just behind the veil of the senses, is the ultimate reality. And the subconscious self is trying all the time to tell this 'to the stupid Man and the dull Bull so that he will carry out the designs of the Soaring Eagle and the Majestic Lion, which is his True Will, so that he may really and in truth become King, sit on his throne, and have conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel.'

The 'stupid Man' is the man who lives on the plane of consciousness alone; the 'dull Bull' is the subconscious which is isolated from consciousness. This was certainly the case with Frank Bennett; his subconscious, or unconscious, had been cut off from his consciousness, and to this extent he was dull. But Crowley had thrown open the riches of the subconscious for him, and given him the impulse to liberate himself, to set free the Eagle, the bird which soars to the heights and is thus a symbol for the spirit. To carry out the designs of the Soaring Eagle and the Majestic Lion – in alchemy the lion stands for Christ – was an urgent matter for Frank Bennett.

The rest of the symbolism – to become King, to sit on the throne, and to have conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel – is a piece of inflation which comes from a sudden impact with the images of the unconscious. On the other hand, the King is the Redeemer, and redemption was the aim of this Australian bricklayer when he set off from Australia in 1921 to join Crowley in Sicily.

The following night, the same excited condition prevailed; this

is the trance, lasting three days, that Crowley in his *Confessions* mentions rather contemptuously. Instead of trying to resist it, Bennett thought he would keep as quiet as possible. 'So I lay down on my bed and said I would consider it as a peculiar dealing of God with my soul. And this idea had the effect of a quiet realization of peace.'

In spite of this, Brother Progradior could not stop thinking, and amid the mêlée of his thoughts, this sentence from *The Book of the Law* persisted, 'The Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs.' It suddenly occurred to him that this, in a veiled form, was what the Beast had said, namely that the subconscious mind was everything, and that this subconscious mind, which Bennett decided was the Khabs, the star, was *in* the Khu, in the conscious mind and not the other way round. To the extent that the subconscious determines the conscious, this is true.

Bennett felt tremendously heartened by this new revelation. 'This at once put all my fear and trouble at ease and rest, and again I felt a kind of ecstasy and peace; but I found that I was perspiring to such an extent that I was absolutely wet through.'

Then the idea came to him that the Lord's Prayer was additional proof of the subconscious mind as summed up in Crowley's dictum. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy WILL be done on Earth, as it is done in Heaven...

Thy WILL be done . . .

'And my ecstasy increased as the idea unfolded itself, which was, when a man does the Will of the Father on Earth, and is conscious that it is his True Will, that will becomes pure . . .'

He began to praise God by reciting the 'hymn' which begins 'Thou, who art I, beyond all I am,' from Crowley's verse play, *The Ship* (see pages 345 and 456).

The next phase, while Bennett was in an ecstatic or manic state, brought forth ideas of grandeur: he had seen the truth and realized the law of doing one's true will as enunciated by the Beast; now he could go on to preach the law to labour leaders and to the working class, and show how each and every person could, by getting in touch with his subconscious, follow his true will. 'And in my imagination, I found myself a Great Leader, and a Member of Parliament, without my consent, but simply pushed there by both classes of the people.'

1 The Khabs (star) is the 'Inmost Light'; the Khu, the magical entity of a man, dependent on the nature of the Khabs.

On Thursday, 1 September, Brother Progradior went on a Magical Retirement. He took with him Mary Butt's novel, Ashe of Rings, printed in Paris by the Three Mountains Press, and a typescript entitled Liber Samekh, a ritual for the attainment of the Knowledge of and Conversation with one's Holy Guardian Angel (CONGRESSUS CUM DAEMONE) which Crowley had just finished composing, under the stimulus of his successful initiation of Frater Progradior, to whom the work is dedicated ('Prepared An XVII [1921]... at the Abbey of Thelema in Cephalaedium by the Beast 666 in service to FRATER PROGRADIOR'). It is printed in full in Magick in Theory and Practice.

Bennett's Magical Retirement seems to have been only a partial one, for daily he returned from his tent to the Abbey where he performed various chores and joined in the rituals – his diary mentions his attendance at 'Pentagram', a banishing ritual to clear

the air of evil spirits.

On 4 September, he made this entry in his record: 'Explored tangle of being a separate being. This was not a success, as I could not get away from the subconscious self, so tried to be conscious

in the subconscious self as a separate being.'

The 'tangle of being a separate being' was the tangle of Bennett's consciousness, which Crowley had told him, rightly, was stifled through being cut off from his unconscious. Bennett apparently tried to define his disturbed consciousness – one could call his state of mind a neurosis – by an act of introspection. Then he attempted to use his consciousness as a torch to enter the unconscious, a phase which sometimes occurs in psychological analysis.

The rest of the time he read Ashe of Rings. (It seems that Bennett had only the typescript of this novel, in which case Mary Butts had finished it at Cefalu. It provided the occasion for Crowley's remark that she cleared off after breakfast to write several pages of 'piffle'.)

'Meditation on the Past and Future,' wrote Progradior in his magical record for 5 September.

This I may consider finished. For as I look across my past life, I find I have spent thirty-six years trying to find the right way. Twelve years ago I first saw the Beast, then I decided, half-heartedly, to follow him. And in the last few years, since I received *The Book of the Law*, I have done a great amount of work for his teaching. But since I have seen him, and lived in the Abbey with him, I have seen something of his inner life;

and his great disappointment, not with his work, but with those who ought to be carrying out his work, in spreading his teaching, and the Law as it is received through him.

I am determined he shall not be disappointed in me; for I will spend the rest of my life in spreading his teaching. I may not be able to do much. But by the help of him, the Beast, and of my own Real Self, which he has given me an insight of – I may do much. For he alone led me to the knowledge of my real subconscious self. Blessed be his Name for ever. And may the Gods grant that I may reincarnate with him again, and again be his disciple.

These moods of elation are followed, as one would expect, by moods of depression. One talk with Crowley on the subconscious could not resolve all Bennett's spiritual problems. On 9 September, at 6.00 am, he got up and, after washing and dressing and putting his tent in order, he began to meditate. The idea of God, of God existing in everything, came into his mind. God was everywhere, even in things which are bad.

Later, he meditated again, and again saw God in everything

ugly and deformed, as well as in all things beautiful.

A paper which Bennett had written on astral journeys and the Cabbala came in for a certain amount of criticism from the Beast when Bennett showed it to him at dinner that day. In his diary, Bennett recorded that although he was never very good at the Cabbala, an inner voice had, on one occasion, told him to lecture on it; and he had almost wept when he had made up his mind to do so. He had begun to study the Cabbala feverishly, and on the appointed day, he had approached the room in which the lecture was to be given with the feeling that he knew nothing about the subject. But in spite of all this, the lecture was a great success, and he afterwards received many letters from people who had been present, saying how much he had helped them. He could express himself clearly and with confidence on the mystical Cabbala as long as he was talking to someone who knew nothing or very little of the subject, but as soon as he came to talk about the Cabbala with Crowley, he was immediately struck dumb.

Crowley had made it a rule that the diaries of his pupils should from time to time be handed over for his inspection. When Crowley came to read Brother Progradior's doubts about himself, and his inability to understand the Cabbala, he wrote in the margin that his, Crowley's, efforts to teach him the Cabbala were like pushing a donkey up a hill.

This comment filled Progradior with black despair, and that night he went to bed feeling he was in hell. He fell asleep and dreamed this dream: the Beast 666 was doing his best to push a donkey up a narrow, steep mountain path.

The donkey came to a step in the path and refused to mount it; it walked to one side, then to the other as if trying to find a way round it.

And when the Beast 666 saw what the donkey was trying to do, he said, 'You must try to mount this step by yourself.' And he turned round and walked away down the mountain path.

It began to grow dark. Indeed, the farther the Beast walked away, the darker it grew; the Beast turned a bend and was lost to sight, and it grew as black as pitch.

When the donkey saw that it was completely dark, it lifted its head high in the air and began to bray.

At this crucial point, the dreamer saw his own face beneath the donkey's cheek-bones; it was just like the drawing the Beast had made of him, with closed eyes and a long, sad, troubled face.

The Beast 666 was the Teacher, the light, and Progradior, who refused to mount to the heights, to the realm of spirit, was a donkey.

In the morning Bennett recorded his dream in his magical record; and in due course Crowley read it, and wrote in the margin, 'Excellent, John Bunyan!'

Before the end of the year, Bennett had left the Abbey and sailed for home where, by all the means in his power, he spread Crowley's word. And he continued of course to correspond with the Beast and his Scarlet Woman, Alostrael, on matters concerning the Order.

The summer was drawing to an end. Mary Butts and Cecil Maitland had returned to Paris, filled with much magick. They had seen, among other spectacles at the Abbey, a goat and the Scarlet woman copulating.¹ Herodotus had observed a similar rite in ancient Egypt and called it a 'prodigy'.

(Immediately afterwards, the Beast had cut the goat's throat and the blood had spurted over Leah's bare back. In an aside, she asked Mary, 'What shall I do now?' And Mary had replied, 'I'd have a bath if I were you.')

1 It was not successful. 'I have offered the body of Babalon to the Virgin He-Goat, but he refused her . . . [Later] I atoned for the young Hegoat at considerable length . . .' (The Magical Record of the Beast 666).

Mary saw blue lights at the Abbey and, on one occasion, 'a huge Assyrian Bull demon'. Crowley praised her clairvoyante capacity. But she was not, like Brother Progradior, in need of discovering her True Will, having discovered it already, to the Beast's annoyance. Maitland heard voices from the astral plane . . .

They left on 16 September, after only three months' training at the *Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum*. According to Douglas Goldring, they said that their sojourn at the Abbey had permanently injured their health and given them the drug habit.

Crowley painted, wrote essays and poems, devised impractical schemes, and anxiously probed the future. The Sun, with stately progress, entered the sign of Libra, and the digestive and respiratory systems of His Vicegerent on Earth, the Beast 666, grew more disordered. He stuggled against insomnia on the one hand and lassitude on the other. 'Yesterday afternoon I sank down exhausted in the shade of a byre on the hillside, and slept on the stony ground for nearly three hours. When I awoke I was aware of a passionate impulse to bolt, bluff my way to England, and compel some of the thieves and traitors who have robbed me to restore my property.' He asked the *Yi King*, 'Shall I go to England immediately?' and was answered, 'He has lost his horses, but let him not seek for them; they will return of themselves.'

The Abbey had been established a year and a half. The Law of Thelema had been taught there by precept and practice and the minds of his few disciples had been opened and enlarged. The Beast had thrust his way to the very top of the magical hierarchy by assuming the Grade of Ipsissimus, and on frequent occasions he had made himself invisible; but he had succeeded in achieving the Great Work only in one of the esoteric meanings of the phrase, the act of producing children, coition.

The situation was summed up by Crowley in one sentence: "There is a sort of formless horror "round the corner" so to speak."

He received a letter from Erna, whose identity I have been unable to discover. 'How shall I reply?' he asked the *Yi King*, and sat up straight at the answer: 'The little gone: the great come.'

A few days later he received another letter from Erna; she had decided to come to the Abbey. The mere thought of Erna filled him with enthusiasm. 'The feeling that Erna thinks of me as the important thing in her life is making me quite my old self.'

He went alone to Palermo to meet her. 'For some Freudian

reason I am as mad as hell this morning,' he wrote while waiting for her. 'I wish Erna to the devil.' And having wished her to the devil, he asked the *Yi King* for a symbol of his future sexual relations with her. The Chinese Oracle replied, 'Restraint.' He interpreted this as 'Let the passions cook up slowly.'

To his surprise and embarrassment, Leah followed him to Palermo – she had come from Cefalu with bad news from the bank – and she arrived simultaneously with Erna. The Beast was pained to observe that Alostrael had succumbed to the unthelemic emotion of jealousy. He ordered her back to the Abbey, and set his mind to the serious business of sexual magic with Erna, but all he managed to obtain from her that day was a kiss.

He returned with Erna to the Abbey and wrote in his magical record, 'Erna jealous of Leah.' Erna wanted the Beast to come with her to Nice, a proposition which appealed to the Knight Guardian of the Sacred Lance. The tension between Leah and Erna rose perilously. 'What shall I do?' he asked the Yi King. 'Be dignified,' was the answer. But it all quickly ended in a quarrel with Erna and her hurried departure from the Abbey of Do what thou wilt.

He directed his insatiable longing towards Aimée Gouraud, a rich elderly widow. He had met her in England before the war, and in America during the war, had offered to marry her and been refused. He wrote to her again; then he went to bed and dreamed that he had been made Pope 'by some illegal means'.

Soon Sister Cypris's elder sister arrived at the Abbey. There is a very unflattering account of Helen Fraux in *The Confessions*. Whatever the reason, she did not get on with Crowley or fit into his community or like the thelemic system of bringing up the children. After five weeks, following a severe altercation with the Beast, she departed.

'The bowels of the Abbey moved at last, and H. Fraux was evacuated. The baffled malice in her shifty little spiteful pig's eyes was very interesting.'

On the way out, as a parting touch, she called upon the Palermo police and complained of all sorts of immoralities in the Abbey. The Sottoprefetto came to look for himself, poked around, found nothing to upset him, and withdrew.

1 In 1914, before leaving for America, Crowley recorded in his diary an act of sexual magic with a prostitute, the object of which was to make 'A.G.' become his Scarlet Woman 'as I have tried several times before with partially good results'.

20 THE FOUNTAIN OF HYACINTH

THERE is another break in *The Magical Record*. Towards the end of January 1922, the narrative ceases. The Beast has prowled from his lair and gone abroad.

The little red pocket-book, with the symbol of the sun and moon conjoined on the title page, and the Wanderer of the Waste among the titles of its author, gives some exact dates. On 30 January, he arrived at Palermo, on his way to Paris.

'Greeted New Moon, very clear and brilliant.'

Two days later he was in Naples, and the following Monday, 6 February, exactly a week after he had left the Abbey, he arrived in Paris. Then, on 14 February, he went alone to Fontainebleau, the town whence, two years before, he had set off to Cefalu with such high hopes.

Liber \$325, sub-title, The Fountain of Hyacinth, tells us what he did in Fontainebleau. He was staying at an inn called Au Cadran Bleu; he had come there for a purpose. These two ruled copy-books, written on one side of the page in Crowley's slanting handwriting, are the diary of a drug addict, the record of a regimen imposed to overcome a habit which leads rapidly to insanity and death.

I, The Beast 666, wishing to prove the strength of my Will and the degree of my courage, have poisoned myself for the last two years and have succeeded finally in reaching a degree of intoxication such that the withdrawal of the drugs (heroin & cocaine) produces a terrible attack by the 'Storm Fiend'. The acute symptoms arise suddenly, usually on awakening from a nap.

By the Storm Fiend, the demon who sends down avalanches on Kangchenjunga, Crowley meant an asthmatic attack.

His brain cells had been poisoned by drugs. All the symptoms are recorded in his diary: a tormenting itching of the skin, vomiting, insomnia, diarrhoea, inflammation of the mouth – to mention only a few. He was going to pieces; the brake must be put on. Heroin, which had been prescribed for his asthma by a

Harley Street physician on his return from America, had been his final undoing. 'The formless horror round the corner' was an apprehension of insanity.

Crowley knew the dangers of drugs but he also knew the heights of pleasure to which they could take him. He therefore concluded that they should be the food only of the gods, great poets, the strong and kingly men, such as was Aleister Crowley.

Look at this shining heap of crystals! They are Hydrochloride of Cocaine. The geologist will think of mica; to me, the mountaineer, they are like those gleaming feather flakes of snow, flowering mostly where rocks jut from the ice of crevassed glaciers, that wind and sun have kissed to ghostliness. To those who know not the great hills, they may suggest the snow that spangles trees with blossoms glittering and lucid.

Those who seek the ecstatic moment, at no matter what cost, let them take drugs.

Give it to no matter whom. Choose me the last losel on the earth; let him suffer all the tortures of disease; take hope, take faith, take love away from him. Then look, see the back of that worn hand, its skin discoloured and wrinkled, perhaps inflamed with agonizing eczema, perhaps putrid with some malignant sore. He places on it that shimmering snow, a few grains only, a little pile of starry dust. The wasted arm is slowly raised to the head that is little more than a skull; the feeble breath draws in that radiant powder. Now we must wait. One minute – perhaps five minutes.

Then happens that miracle of miracles, as sure as death, and yet as masterful as life; a thing more miraculous, because so sudden, so apart from the usual course of evolution. *Natura non facit saltum*. True, therefore, this miracle is a thing as it were against nature.

He had taken drugs for the Great Work with Allan Bennett in Chancery Lane, to part the veils of matter, to discover the Philosopher's Stone, to establish the Law of Thelema.

'I possess a secret remedy which I call laudanum,' wrote Paracelsus three hundred years before.

And Aleister Crowley: 'Mine inmost identity says, "To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, and be drunk thereof!" It is lawful to do this, for to worship Him

[Aiwass] is to make Him manifest, and so to fill the world with truth and beauty.'

But, alas, he had gone too far. He had erred, the worship had become forced, and fallen into frenzy which blasphemes Him. 'He bids us also to "exceed by delicacy", to "drink by the eight and ninety rules of art"; but I have exceeded by depravity and drunk by the three hundred and thirty-three rules of the toper.'

Restlessness, another symptom of drug poisoning, had obliged him to pack up and retrace his steps.

'Part of my plan in coming here is to dig up the bitter memories which had been killing me. I was so happy and hopeful here two years ago; and now my little Poupée has been dead over a year, and her little brother never came to birth; and my manhood part is crushed.'

He had been taking heroin continuously; three or four doses to help him get up, and doses at short intervals practically all day. At the same time he had been having 'two or three prolonged bouts of cocaine every week'. He does not divulge in Liber ** the amount of these heroin doses, but it is clear from this record, and from other references, that the total daily dosage added up to at least four or five grains, a very large quantity which only Crowley's strong constitution and his body's acquired toleration could withstand.

He became listless and idle. Everything bored him. He was unable to count his money, inspect bills, enjoy a meal or a drink; he grew indifferent to washing and shaving; his memory became dull; his creative life stopped.

He was surprised that so complete a cachexy should be unaccompanied by even the slightest mental derangement, for he could find in himself no trace of hallucination, of persecution mania, or of tendencies to duplicity or concealment, and no delusions or defects of judgement. The list is his. He joked about his inability to sleep. Did he sleep at all? he asked himself, and replied, only at the extreme of exhaustion, 'say after fifteen hours' painting and dictating, followed by perhaps six hours' sexual frenzy, reinforced by veronal and heroic doses of strong alcoholic drinks'.

During his first day at the *Cadran Bleu*, he went for a walk before dinner, avoided alcohol, and sniffed heroin and cocaine until 8.00 pm. When he finally went to bed, he tossed and turned most of the night. He was awake at 9.30 in the morning. 'Struggled hard to get up but relapsed and slept till after 11.' About midday,

319

he went for a walk, ate a light lunch; then, at 3.30 pm, he returned to his hotel fagged out and retired for a nap. He recorded his walk: 'The breath of the forest hit me like a club the moment I left the town. I felt cured of everything. I broke into a series of storms of sobbing; great relief.'

He slept for half an hour; then he was seized by the Storm Fiend 'with terrible and unendurable violence'. He suffered for four minutes and drove away the phantom with a big sniff of heroin, but relief, although instantaneous, was only partial. 'The residual symptoms abated slowly, and I was normal, nearly, at 4.17. From then I got worse again slowly.'

From 4.30 pm till 6.00 pm, he took four doses of heroin, two

small doses, one medium dose, and one big dose.

He had devised a simple plan for his cure. The day was divided into an Open and a Close Season, times for taking heroin and cocaine, and times when they were strictly forbidden. The Open Season was to be decreased each day by an hour, until it was squeezed right out. The exception to this rule was when the Storm Fiend was 'actually on the job', as he lightly put it. He did not wish to cure himself so completely that he would no longer want to take drugs - they were, after all, part of his magic - but to maintain a pleasant equilibrium with them, as he had always been able to. One can give up opium by taking morphine instead. An ingenious gentleman of Hong Kong 'cured' a large number of addicts in this way.1 Fortified by heroin, Crowley found that he could bravely dispense with cocaine 'right away'. He commented:

One returns to it [cocaine] from the normal impulse to 'get going'. This impulse appears to depend upon external circumstances. (I am now, by the way, slightly intoxicated [with heroin] - positively pleased, not merely negatively relieved - by the 5 doses of the last 2 hours.) I am combating my access of hunger for the drug by strychnine and by eating.

He advised himself, like a good country doctor, to stop thinking about his craving. The hunger for heroin, he reasoned, was in part caused by the mental obsession. If his mind was distracted, if he had something to do, this would help outwit the Storm Fiend. His most distressing symptom was his insomnia.

Other aids were: (1) use of IX° formula (sexual magic); (2) hard physical exercise every day, with a walk of at least half an hour after dinner; (3) hydrotherapy - a hot bath with eau-de-Cologne

rub before going to bed, and a cold bath on waking; (4) alcohol before retiring; (5) soporific, unless asleep within half an hour of lying down.

Programme for the third day. It was to begin with his being awakened - 'forced waking' he calls it - at 8.30 am; breakfast, bath, and a walk; lunch in forest; no heroin till 1.00 pm. Then doses at pleasure until curfew at 6.00 pm.

He does not say whether he managed to struggle up at 8.30, but at 6.30 pm, that is half an hour after curfew, he took a medium dose of heroin. He made the honest comment:

This is a real indulgence in the worst sense of the word. It has occurred very frequently that I have taken a dose for reasons at present utterly unfathomable. (This is a confession indeed, for Me, who claim to be the foremost living psychologist!) There is not the slightest discomfort to be removed, or the faintest wish to reach some still superior state. It is an absolutely perverse impulse.

A quarter of an hour later, he helped himself again. '6.45 pm. Small dose. Taken partly to prove to myself that I was not alarmed by the reflection above set down.'

This was, of course, a rationalization and Crowley knew it. In a melancholy mood, he wrote down 'certain pathological points', extending the catalogue of his ills. A year before he had noticed that his sight, which had always been so good, was weakening; now it was worse. There was an increasing indifference to matters of 'cleanliness and vanity'; and there were 'alarming mental symptoms' which could be summed up as a feeling that nothing was worth while.

'Medium dose. Excuse, a perverted sense of duty. The clock had struck 7. There are several audible clocks in the town, and I wanted to assert my right to take a last dose between the competing chimes.'

Idiosyncratic and poetic, but so much for curfew! He was now 'nice drunk' (on heroin), as Alostrael would say. The day had been one of anguish and defeat. As he had lumbered about the forest, 'Poupée had peeped from every alley. I think of her now without the least tendency to emotion of any kind at all; it is even hard to remember that I ever regretted her for an instant.'

Fuddled, he put a cigar in his mouth 'as the safest place', intending to smoke it after dinner, but he lit it immediately and only discovered his error after he had half smoked it.

'I am now not only "nice drunk" but "very drunk," not far short of "bloody drunk". My eyes are swimming; my ears are singing; I feel "floppy"; and I radiate beatitude of the most beatific blessedness. My middle name is Benedict; they call me Felix for short.'

The ghosts of his old friends, Kelly, Back, Allan Bennett, Eckenstein, from whom he had long since parted, floated in from outside and grouped themselves around him. He was enjoying 'a formless ecstasy', unsurpassed by anything in his experience. He must take courage. 'Be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy,' he quoted from *The Book of the Law*. It had not been a day of defeat; on the contrary. The nectar he had drunk could not have served him better.

'It is my will to eat and drink that my body may be fortified thereby that I may accomplish the Great Work,' he said, quoting the thelemic grace before meals. 'En avant, Pegase!'

At 10.10 pm he had dinner. He seems to have thoroughly enjoyed it, especially the wine; then he went forth to the local brothel.

'I went to number 4 and number 6, to look for a female primate, genus Homo Rapiens; the best of a banal bunch was a short and sturdy creature called Paulette. I hardly feel justified in robbing Pierrette to pay her! I drank a vieux Marc and a Cointreau to pay my footing.'

He began the new day by making some observations. Heroin, which stopped at once the distressing symptoms of his bronchitis.

1 Eckenstein died the previous year. 'I have just heard that the Veil of Life has fallen from the eyes of OSCAR ECKENSTEIN, my comrade in climbing and my teacher in Meditation since Easter, 1898,' he wrote in his Magical Record. 'May it be granted unto Him even according until his Will; yea, according unto his Will. AUMN, AUMN, AUMN.' Later that day he and Alostrael performed 'a Requiem Mass for OSCAR ECKENSTEIN.... I wore my White and Gold Abbai, my X° Star, my Rosy Cross of Topaz and Vermilion-painted Oak, my Ring of 9° = 2° A.A. and my Forehead Fillet of Gold bearing the Abra-Melin URIEL square. This last I have not worn for very many years, perhaps not since my great Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of mine Holy Guardian Angel. I anointed BABALON and myself with Abra-Melin Oil, which burnt our brows intensely...'

had no effect on his asthma; if anything, it left it worse than before.

'I feel no temptation to take heroin in order to acquire strength to get up. Things could hardly seem more favourable; but of course they may be the prelude to all sorts of horrors.

'12.00. Awake at last after several relapses.'

He had to pay for his extravagance of yesterday. The weather was damp and dull and his thoughts and feelings were damper and duller. After lunch he crawled up the Rocker d'Avon and described his mood as without enthusiasm, vigour, or courage. He noted that, as the important part of the treatment was to increase the period of abstinence, and as heroin postpones sleep, he must be very rigid about curfew, but, letting out the line at the other end, 'allow a little latitude to reveille'. He sniffed heroin the whole afternoon.

There is a dull malaise, combined lack of any interest in anything, and the knowledge that cocaine would put me right at once. Cocaine is barred altogether, of course. The reason is this. The hunger for it is strictly normal, and a man ought to be able to master his normal passions. Physical torture, on the other hand, simply throws the moral apparatus out of gear . . .

I was slightly asthmatic, by the way, during my whole walk today. But I felt no temptation to take any cocaine on that score. I am tempted strongly, though, now – for I resent the tedium of my state. I want to smoke, eat, read, write, drink, and sleep – all at once; and I cannot settle to any one of these with the least enjoyment. The feeling resembles that of subconscious worry. But I am unable to worry about anything, my affairs, Leah, old memories, nothing seems to matter. I want to be able to get into some positive state of mind, no odds on what subject; and I can't. Only cocaine could help me, and I won't take it.

The strain increased; he felt a strong urge to throw the whole cure overboard and plunge into a heroin and cocaine jag.

5.15 pm. Heavy with sleep, and on the verge of 'nice drunk'.
5.28 pm. Small dose. I did not want this dose, but I want to take 7 in the 3 hours, so as not to diminish the ration too quickly. I want to take 6 doses tomorrow, for prudence's sake, and yet to take one less than on the previous day. If I took 6 today and 6 tomorrow, I might feel that I was failing to make

progress; while tomorrow it might well be that 5 were not enough to carry me over till Saturday.

After dinner his spirits picked up. He had not broken curfew, and after being revived by coffee and two glasses of brandy, he took a short walk,

feeling as I used to in 1896 on a bright May morning in a new suit, strolling up Trinity Street. I wish to note that one of the nuisances connected with the legends current as to the effects of drug-taking is that one is apt to attribute any and every unpleasant symptom either to addiction or to abstinence... after a bad night and weary walk in wet weather I wonder whether my asthma, depression, and other disagreeable phenomena are due to (a) lack of cocaine, (b) too much cocaine, (c) too much heroin, (d) too little heroin. The fundamental trouble about drugs is then that they tend to obsess one.

He decided that he had nothing to fear. He was far from being a drug addict. 'There is yet, I regret to say, one super-subtle whisper: is not your freedom from apprehension a device of "the devil" to induce you to disdain your manifold precautions, and to go on the loose in order to show your superiority to the whole situation?'

Ether, hashish, mescal, opium, and morphine had no habit-forming influence on him whatever, he said. On the contrary, he had had only the most pleasant and profitable experiences from them. But heroin and cocaine had caused him a lot of 'annoyance'. One sniff of heroin and most of his unpleasant symptoms 'depart unceremoniously'. And without heroin life was hell.

'3.58 pm. Medium dose. The final dose was taken with a certain anguish (I use this word as equivalent to *angoisse*) which I instantly recognised as saying: "All very well for today but what about tomorrow when the limit is 4 doses?"

As he cut down the Open Season the misery increased.

'2.00 am. One spasm follows another, each ending in complete exhaustion. I have tried inhaling eau-de-Cologne: no good. I will make one last stand at Fort Vaux.

'2.31 am. Useless sacrifice of human life. Retire on second line. *Ils ne passeront pas*.'

After curfew he took one small dose which brought very slight relief. Immediately afterwards, he took a large, a medium, dose, and felt almost calm; then, minutes later, another medium dose.

'I could almost certainly have cut short the attack with less trouble if I had not let it go so far. I am "all in" from exhaustion, every muscle aching from the strain, breath still quick and laboured, traces of "phlegm-ball" still in throat."

Touched with remorse at these lapses, he decided to consider the three doses as borrowed; they must be paid back by abstentions during the next Open Season.

Moods of elation alternated with those of depression. 'I have made one gigantic stride towards recovery. I have regained my belief in myself as a World-Force. . . . I am tremendously encouraged by the thought that this record will be a model which may serve men to work out their own mastery of "habits" without compulsion of alien assistance.'

And in the depressive phase of his feelings, he wondered, indifferently, if he would be dead by the morning.

What had happened to the cure? He had expected success too soon. He thought he had broken the back of the habit after a week but at the end of a month, he was still taking 'extra' doses of heroin.

He missed Alostrael; he needed her. He made a will, revoking all previous wills, leaving everything he possessed to her, and making her his sole executrix. And shortly afterwards he left Au Cadran Bleu and went to Paris to meet her. It was not a successful meeting. For the first time since they had faced each other in New York in 1918, a gulf dividing them appeared at their feet. His cure was a failure and his love for Leah Hirsig, a curse. 'This whole period since my return to Paris can be summarized "From Bad to Worse". Leah is violent spiritual poison to me. We love deeply and truly; we sympathize; we do all we can to help each other, but we act on each other like cancer.'

As for his heroin habit, he must find some other way to cure it. And he sat down and wrote to Dr Edmund Gros, telling him the whole story and asking him to find for him a sanatorium where he could direct his own treatment; for, as the chosen minister of the gods, it would not only destroy his 'whole theory' to submit to medical treatment, but would be an act of blasphemy.

After an interview with Dr Gros, who prescribed luminal and suggested a sanatorium in Divonne-les-Bains, Aix, he felt better and decided to continue without going to a sanatorium.

1 In 1935, when he was made bankrupt, the manuscript, still unpublished, was seized, with other of his manuscripts, by his creditors.

He returned to Fontainebleau, and one spring evening, at twilight, he struck the magic bell, uttered the holy names, and called upon Aiwass, his Holy Guardian Angel. And it did seem to him that there, amid the darkness, in the corner of the room, a presence moved.

From this invocation, he expected only 'great good fortune'. He did not try to divine what it might be. The gods proceed in mysterious ways, and he was in their hands entirely.

A few days later, a young man called Augustine Booth-

Clibborn, turned up to see him.

From 8.30 pm to 1.30 am Crowley expounded to him the Law of Thelema, and when Booth-Clibborn retired, the Beast was highly pleased. Was this fellow 'great good fortune' promised by Aiwass? They had understood each other perfectly and Booth-Clibborn, who felt that he had it in himself to be a leader of men, had recognised the greatness of Crowley's word for mankind. Thelema was a battle-cry. The Beast thought pleasantly about Augustine Booth-Clibborn during the night while he struggled with insomnia. Here was another disciple for the Abbey. Leah could make him their Commander-in-Chief in the field.

'He is in financial straits because of his pride – his! The poor parasite of the terrene crust who could be God's Archangel if he

would only do his will.'

Crowley's practical plan for this young man, sent by Aiwass, was that he should immediately wire his mother for funds. The Beast mentioned two likely sums, one of which he should ask for: £93 or £418, both numbers, especially the latter, of high Thelemic significance. (93 = Aiwaz or Thelema or Agape; 418 = the word of the Aeon, ABRAHADABRA.)

He speedily worked out a course of action. Booth-Clibborn should report at once to Alostrael and say, 'I am the babe in the egg; in you is all power given; The Beast has sent me to take command of the active promulgation of the Law; and I am the

First of those who work under the new regimen.'

Meanwhile Crowley went on taking heroin and cocaine, in and out of season, until he could write that nothing mattered any more to him but the Great Work, just as Van Gogh had cried out that he painted only to escape from the misery of his existence. He wished to die but he still had the strength to live, and amid the encircling wall of madness gleamed a streak of sanity or of something which looked like sanity. His measure of sanity, perhaps, is in his wish to go mad.

I invoke Aiwass to break down my resistance, to whirl me away in the wind of His word, so that I rage ruthlessly through the world like a dust-devil in the desert. I invoke Him [Aiwass] to destroy my consciousness of everything but His current. If that is the equivalent of insanity, very good: sanity has not so many claims that I should cling to the old coarse creature when the adulterous arms of my hot harlot are open, and her wet red mouth pants with passion, and her eyes gleam with evil glamour, and her belly twitches with savage spasms, while she hails me hoarsely with a voice, vividly vicious, screaming its horror around the brazen domes of hell.

Booth-Clibborn had first to be initiated into the Order of the Silver Star. His message or magical motto was – Crowley chose carefully for him – 'I am unique and a conquerer.'

Then the pledge. Crowley had already written it out in his little notebook covered in red morocco. 'I, Arthur Augustine Booth-Clibborn, in the presence of The Beast 666, solemnly pledge myself to the Great Work.' He offered it to his new pupil to sign, but Booth-Clibborn, for a reason best known to himself, declined to do so, and brought down upon his head the anathema of the Beast. After he had gone, Crowley wrote in the record instead: 'He was too cowardly to sign this. He was premeditating treachery and swindling me: but he feared terribly.'

21 KING LAMUS OF TELEPYLUS

NEITHER Crowley nor Leah was in a hurry to get back to the Abbey. Leah, it seems, was also suffering from the effects of drug poisoning and, she feared, from tuberculosis of the lungs. She had grown thin, sweated at night, coughed blood. Should she go to Switzerland for a cure? Or to London? Crowley did not want to go to Switzerland. The Yi King seemed to suggest London, so he said good-bye to his Paris lover, Camille, and looked towards his native land. His return to Britain would be 'like the self-immolation and self-renewal of the Phoenix'.

Clad in Highland dress, his face painted, he set off for London, his Scarlet Woman on his arm, and no more than £10 in his pocket. This was his best and only outfit. He had recently retrieved it from the cleaner's where, with two other tartan kilts, a green military tunic and a waistcoat of many colours, it had been waiting for him since 1914. At Hardelot, near Boulogne, in the Hotel Christol, he was mistaken for a financier with a price on his head, and arrested. His disguises were pulled off him. Beneath his glengarry cap was a jet-black, frizzy wig. No, he protested, he was not Gerard Lee Bevan, the crook, but Aleister Crowley, the distinguished poet and mountaineer, and he produced, in addition to his passport, Guillarmod's book on the expedition to Chogo Ri which contained his photograph. By the time the detectives released him, his boat had left, 'but I had not enjoyed myself so much in five years.'

During the first week of May, they arrived in London, where, after the First World War, it was as difficult to find accommodation as it was after the Second. His old friend, Gwendoline Otter, advised him not to trudge back to his hotel in Russell Square but to look for something in Chelsea. He walked along the King's Road, and at Wellington Square, inspiration told him to try the sacred numbers, especially 31, the Secret Key to *The Book of the Law*. A furniture van was outside the door of No 31; the owner herself was just moving in and there was still a vacant room or two. 'The bow drawn at venture had hit the ideal at the first twang of the string. The miracle was the more striking that the card had not been in the window till a few hours before.' he commented.

He called on Austin Harrison and sold him an article on drugs; it was printed in the June (1922) issue of The English Review under the title of 'The Great Drug Delusion'. He described himself as 'a New York Specialist'. In the course of his piece, he said with some truth that since 1898 'I have been principally occupied in studying the effects of various drugs upon the human organism, with special reference to the parallelism between the psychical phenomena of drug-neuroses, insanities, and mystical illuminations'. He added that 'in pursuit of this laudable aim, I attempted to produce a "drug-habit" in myself. In vain. My wife literally nagged me about it: "Don't go out without your cocaine, sweetheart!" or "Did you remember to take your heroin before lunch, big boy?" 'The article concluded with an 'Editorial Note' which informed the reader that in the 'private clinic' of the author of the piece, 'patients are not treated for their "habit" at all. They are subjected to a process of moral reconstruction; as soon as this is accomplished, the drug is automatically forgotten.' The 'clinic' of this 'New York Specialist' was at Cefalu, of course.

The next, July, issue of *The English Review* contained three articles by Crowley under three different pseudonyms: 'Percy Bysshe Shelley' by Prometheus; 'The Jewish Problem Re-stated' by a Gentile; 'The Drug Panic' by a London Physician. The August issue contains 'The Crisis in Freemasonry' by a Past Grand Master; this was also by Crowley as the final paragraph, with its hailing of the Aeon of Horus, of the Crowned and Conquering Child, makes clear.

Crowley's contributions might have continued had he been able to restrain himself from quarrelling with Harrison. 'He would argue for an hour that he had said pounds and not guineas. I can hardly explain why I enjoy watching such contemptible wrigglings. I suppose it is the same sort of fascination as makes one stop to watch a street squabble between two prostitutes.'

Sullivan had suggested to him that he should take the idea of his autobiography to Grant Richards, a publisher who, in the words of Bernard Shaw, ruined himself by a too great addiction to literature. There was a good chance, said Sullivan, who knew Richards, of his commissioning the work; he would put in a good word for the Beast.

Richards was dubious about the success of such an undertaking; he also found Crowley's terms unacceptable.

Crowley returned to Richards with a new proposition – a novel about the drug traffic. It would be a welcome relief from the

epidemic of novels on the white slave traffic. He knew something about drugs; he had travelled widely in the East, and recently in America, and had come across enough evidence of illicit cocaine and heroin sniffing. And he gave Richards a synopsis, entitled *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, which he had sketched out on a sheet of notepaper.

Richards excused himself from accepting this work and suggested Hutchinson or Collins.

Neither of these publishers meant anything to the Beast, but he paid a visit to the office of William Collins because it happened to be on his way home.

An interview was arranged between him and their adviser, J. D. Beresford, the novelist. The face of Beresford was vaguely familiar to Crowley. Between them, they soon found out where they had met fifteen years earlier. The contract was speedily drawn up and signed, and the advance royalty of £60 paid. Crowley gratefully acknowledges that it was Beresford who persuaded William Collins to commission *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*.

His courage returned, his energy gushed forth. He had always published his own books at his own expense; he was an amateur, not a professional author. And now a commercial publisher was paying him! From Alostrael's diary, *The Magical Diary of Babalon*, we know that she considered *The Drug Fiend* to be one of the great events of the Beast's life, the reward of the gods.

He immediately cabled the Ape who had returned to Paris, to come back at once; and as soon as she arrived, he began dictating the novel in his room which overlooked Wellington Square.

The Diary of a Drug Fiend is the story of Sir Peter and Lady Pendragon who, seeking to heighten their pleasure by heroin, ruin their health and lose their sanity. At a stage when they seem to be in an inextricable mess, they are saved by a mysterious man of unusual fascination and strength, King Lamus, who takes them to his Abbey of Telepylus, where they are promptly cured and made whole again.

Sir Peter is a composite figure, but Crowley said he drew the worst elements of his character from Cecil Maitland. And King Lamus is, of course, himself.

I don't know how he dares to come to England at all [says one of the minor characters]. He lives in a place called Telepylus, wherever that is. He's over a hundred years old, in spite of his

looks. He's been everywhere, and done everything, and every step he treads is smeared with blood. He's the most evil and dangerous man in London. He's a vampire, he lives on ruined lives.

King Lamus ruled over the Laestrygones, the cannibal giants encountered by Odysseus. His stronghold was Telepylus, said to be in the north western part of Sicily, near Cefalu in fact. Crowley admitted that the darker elements in the character of King Lamus were taken from himself.

When Sir Peter and his drug-crazed wife arrive at the Abbey, Crowley could not refrain from delivering another blow at Mary Butts and Cecil Maitland. Says King Lamus: "We had two people last year, absolutely hopeless rotters. They called themselves writers, and imagined they were working if they retired solemnly after breakfast and produced half a page of piffle by lunch. But they didn't know the meaning of work; and the place nearly drove them insane. They were bored with the Abbey..."

On 1 July, Crowley stopped dictating and wrote: 'Total 121,000 words written in long hand by my Scarlet Woman of Whoredom between 11 am on 4 June and 12.45 am on 1 July: 27 days 12\frac{3}{4} hrs. Average 4321 words *per diem*. Allowance, too, must be made for my having a severe feverish cold during the last week.'

Three months earlier he had been almost deaf from heroin poisoning. 'I think I have killed myself pretty thoroughly all over at last; it is rare that a severed antenna twitches' was one of the last entries in Liber 23. He had been in the same dismal state as Sir Peter and Lady Pendragon, and no Mr King Lamus had come to his rescue; and the real Abbey of Thelema, haunted by formless horrors, from which he had fled, was very different from the idvllic Abbey at 'Telepylus'. I wonder if the contrast ever occurred to Leah Hirsig, the Abbey's Virgin Guardian, as she took down the happy ending at King Lamus's Abbey, set within a scenery she knew so well. Apparently not, for the Abbey of Do What Thou Wilt at Cefalu, although primitive - there was no gas or electric light in the place and the only water was from a well in the yard – and-devoid of all personal privacy, was the first home she could call her own. She infinitely preferred it to the prim little New York apartment with cut glass and her mother as housekeeper. And there was no comparison to her mind between her former dull existence as schoolmistress in the Bronx and her present exalted position as Scarlet Woman to Aleister Crowley,

who was the Prophet of the Sun and of the God of War and Vengeance, Ra-Hoor-Khuit. No, Leah was completely identified with her Master's demoniac hopes.¹

He had given Collins a synopsis of his magnum opus, his autobiography or autohagiography as he called it, and on the day he delivered the completed manuscript of *The Drug Fiend*, Collins agreed to commission this autohagiography or *Confessions*, a work which would be half a million words or more, and they gave him a cheque for £120 as an advance on royalties.

Alostrael's work was now done. The autohagiography could wait. London's atmosphere was bad for her lungs, so Crowley sent her back to the Abbey. It would be uncharitable to suggest that he now wanted to get rid of her.

In November, *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* was published. It gathered the usual indifferent reviews. No one hailed it as a work of genius. *The Times Literary Supplement* pointed out that it has neither the literary fascination of a De Quincey nor the power and stark realism of a Zola, but 'the book teems both with an immense fertility of incidents and idea; and with an amazingly rich crop of rhetoric . . . a phantasmagoria of ecstasies, despairs, and above all verbiage.' Within a month or two it would have been submerged by other novels had not the egregious James Douglas—the epithet is V. S. Pritchett's—selected it for his weekly piece in the *Sunday Express*. Douglas, who had denounced Aldous Huxley's *Antic Hay* for its 'ordure and blasphemy', described *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* as 'an ecstatic eulogy of the drug', coupled it with James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and called for its immediate extirpation.

The work is not an ecstatic eulogy of heroin but it does advocate its controlled use in magical rituals; there is therefore more than a grain of truth in the charge. And Crowley did advertise himself and his Abbey in the novel and quote from *The Book of the Law*.

The Abbey of Thelema at Telepylus is a real place. It and its customs and members, with the surrounding scenery, are accurately described. The training there given is suited to all conditions of spiritual distress, and for the discovery and development of the 'True Will' of any person. Those interested are invited to communicate with the author of this book.

A small number of people replied. One man wrote:

1 From the diary of Leah Hirsig.

Dear Sir, Your amazingly interesting book, *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, has left a vivid impression on my mind, and I wonder if your friends at the Abbey of Thelema could possibly help me discover what *my* Will is? I am quite serious about this, so please do not imagine that I am indulging in any 'funny business'.

I was born in Ireland (where I spent the first twenty years of my life), and have travelled extensively in North and South America with shorter visits to the Continent. I served in the Boer War of 1899, and also in the last little scrap, but was knocked out at Gallipoli. In all these years I have been connected with soft goods – first in shops and warehouses and, since 1917, as the Representative of a New York firm. I have no love for the game, and have only succeeded in making a comfortable living by it, but apparently I am doomed to spend the whole of my life among soft goods!

My only hobbies are Music, Photography and Amateur Theatricals, and I have one obsession. I have a positive mania to be the slave of practically any good-looking youth who crosses my path. Please do not jump to the conclusion that I am simply a degenerate of the Oscar Wilde type. I have never been 'intimate' with any human being in my life, and have no desire for sexual intercourse of any kind, though I feel quite sure that if any man (for whom I had any affection) wanted to abuse me I should not refuse his request. The dominant desire is just to serve, with a morbid wish to be whipped by any youth who captivates my fancy. This mania has been with me for over twenty years, but it has only been indulged on two separate occasions - once in New York in 1909 and in London in 1919 – by two youths who took me at my word and flogged me, just for sheer devilment I suppose, and I enjoyed the experience, but neither of the boys would continue the

That is my story, and I wonder if your friends can help me overcome this mental 'habit'. It has not interferred with my health or business, and is, of course, unsuspected by my nearest friends. Perhaps this will not be within the scope of your Order, but I could not let the opportunity pass. I have no real bent of any kind, and yet I feel that I am a square peg in a round hole – the only dominant desire I possess is the will to serve others. Trusting that your Order may be able to help me find my 'Will', I remain, [etc.].

'You don't tell me your age,' replied Crowley, 'but you can't be very old, and messing around with these assorted nuts may find you a very dry and dusty raisin at 50. Come to me that I may trample you underfoot and press out wine for the Lord Dionysus.'

The following Sunday, the Express attacked again, and with new ammunition, for they had interviewed Mary Butts. 'COMPLETE EXPOSURE OF "DRUG FIEND" AUTHOR. Black Record of Aleister Crowley. Preying on the Debased. His Abbey. Profligacy and Vice in Sicily' were the headlines on the front page.

'The story of the bestial orgies conducted by Aleister Crowley in Sicily sounds like the ravings of a criminal lunatic, made mad by his own depravity... unspeakable orgies, impossible of description.'

And Mrs Betty Bickers, who had known Crowley in America, added her drop to the ocean by telling the *Express* that the Master Therion had given two lectures at her house and borrowed money from her.

The Beast had returned to his Abbey and was reading the Sunday Express in the Mediterranean sunshine. After consulting the Yi King on what line of action to take, he dictated a letter to Lord Beaverbrook, whose newspaper it was, urging fair play and an independent inquiry. Of course, the founder of a new religion must expect to be attacked and vilified by the supporters of the old, but he was not pleased. And he made the sign of the Pentagram to banish evil influences.

William Collins were not idly standing by; they replied to James Douglas by announcing their intention of selling as many copies of *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* as they could, but after the second onslaught in the *Sunday Express*, they decided to drop Crowley, and they let the novel go out of print.

22 FRATER AUD

In the summer of 1922, an Oxford undergraduate called Raoul Loveday – his real Christian names were Frederick Charles – married an artist's model known in London bohemian circles as Betty May. Loveday was her third husband.

The ring slipped from Raoul's nervous fingers and rolled into a corner of the Oxford registry office. A bad omen, but not so bad as the mysterious outline of a young man lying horizontally above Raoul's head in a photograph of the married couple taken in the gardens of St John's College on the afternoon of the same day.

'It was as though the form was asleep or dead, and the arms were raised slightly behind the head, while the head dropped gently to one side,' said Betty May.

With a first in History, Raoul came to London to look for a job. He had no money and Betty helped to keep him with the money she earned as a model. She sat for Epstein and from her vivid face with its dilated nostrils he made the bust 'The Savage'.

One night, while Raoul and Betty were in a Soho café called The Harlequin, Betty Bickers joined them. The conversation turned to magic, and Mrs Bickers disclosed that Crowley was staying with her (he had given up his room at 31 Wellington Square) and she offered to introduce Raoul to him.

Raoul was enthusiastic; for the last two years he had been studying Crowley's works. He wanted to meet the Beast straight away. His wife, Betty, was not so keen; she had seen Crowley once in the Café Royal during 1914 and had been unfavourably impressed by him. She said that she tried to dissuade Raoul from going to meet Crowley, but that he would not listen to her, and that, in the company of Mrs Bickers, he went off without her.

These events are unfolded in Betty May's autobiography, *Tiger-Woman*, 1929. According to her account, she waited for two days and nights for Raoul to return. On the third night, as she lay asleep on the third floor of an old house in Beak Street, Soho, she was awakened by the sound of someone trying to get through the window. Raoul, like a steeplejack, had scaled the drain-pipe; he was covered in dust from his climb and his breath stank of ether.

At last he was doing all the things he had long dreamed of doing, seeking the Formless Fire with the greatest Magus of the age, the Master Therion.

This, then, is the virtue of the Magick of The Beast 666: to pierce the veils of every sanctuary, pressing forward to embrace every image . . . And the Fire shall reveal to his eyes his own image in its own true glory; and it shall speak in his ears the Mystery that is his own right Name.

Crowley thought highly of Loveday. In his opinion, Loveday had greater magical potential than either Neuburg, George Stansfield Jones, or Cecil Frederick Russell. 'His character was extraordinary,' said the Beast. 'He possessed every qualification for becoming a Magician of the first rank. I designed him from the first interview to be my Magical heir.'

In Raoul, Crowley saw the design of the gods. He was the pupil he 'had needed for the last ten years, a man with every gift that a Magus might need, and already prepared for initiation by practically complete knowledge, not only of the elements but of the essence of Magick'.

Betty May soon discovered that Raoul was married more to Crowley than to her. She begged him to give up this magician or, at least, to stop taking drugs, the destructive power of which she well knew, for she had been a cocaine addict.

They moved to other lodgings. Betty hoped that this would give Crowley the slip, but soon there came a knock on the door.

I beheld a ponderous man attired in a Highland kilt, standing in an attitude of benediction with both hands raised and in one of them a green wand about five feet in length, round which coiled a symbolic snake. On one of his very small hands was a curious ring... He had dark, glowing, hypnotic eyes, and a loose sallow skin, with very full red lips. He had a massive head on which was placed a glossy, black curly wig. 'Do what thou wilt,' he pronounced in a slightly nasal accent, which made the words sound less impressive than they would otherwise have done, 'do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.'

1 It seems that Crowley could hypnotise people of the impressionable kind, especially those who were looking for a Master. I am indebted to Mrs Eileen Bigland for the following Aleister Crowley story; it was told to her by her mother.

There was once a beautiful, rich, and titled woman. One day while up

The Yi King informed the Beast that the Abbey was sinking into the mud. There was nothing to keep him in England now he had written and delivered The Diary of a Drug Fiend — so he might as well go back there and start his next great work, his Autohagiography. But he lacked the fare. Should he ask Mr Robinson Smith, a retired concert agent whom he had met at Austin Harrison's house at Seaford, to lend him some money? The Yi King, sagest of oracles, thought that he should. The Yi King was right again; Mr Robinson Smith acceded to Crowley's request.

In the middle of October 1922, the Beast, after inviting Mrs Bickers to a full course of magick at the Abbey, departed for Cefalu.

He broke his journey at Rome, performed an act of sexual magick with a prostitute called Bruna Runietti, with the object of acquiring power for the Great Work. From Rome, he wrote to Raoul, urging him to come to the Abbey as soon as possible, and he salted the letter with advice on how to keep his wife in order. As for the fare, they could borrow it from a great White Magician called Robinson Smith, whose address he enclosed.

He asked the Oracle – through one of the Holy Books – for a word on his return, and was answered with the devastating, 'Even unto the abyss, annihilation.'

In spite of his success in London, he had come back with only £20, all that remained of the sum given him by Robinson Smith. He settled down energetically to dictate the story of his life to his two secretaries, the Ape of Thoth and Sister Estai, the new magical title of Jane Wolfe, formerly Sister Metonith, who had ascended to a higher grade in the Order.

The great and kindly White Magician supplied the Lovedays' fare and they departed for the Abbey. From Betty's account, the Abbey was the last place she wanted to go to, and the Beast the last person she wanted to meet; from another account – that of Raoul's sister – she was quite pleased to go there, but whether she

in town, she was returning to her hotel – the Ritz – and stopped to look into the window of Fortnum and Mason. Suddenly she became aware of a presence – something remote and yet terrifyingly close. With a start, she glanced up and saw the reflection in the window-pane of a man standing beside her. The stranger introduced himself. His name was Aleister Crowley; he was a poet and mountaineer. The two vanished into the Ritz, where they remained for ten days. Shortly afterwards, her marriage broke up.

was pleased or not, she went, and on their arrival on 26 November, the front door was slammed by Crowley in her face – for not answering the thelemic greeting of *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law* with its corollary, *Love is the Law*, *love under will*. When at the Abbey of Thelema, do as Thelemites do.

Betty found the Abbey extraordinary or, rather, that part of it occupied by the temple in the main entrance hall, with its altar and magic circle painted on the floor. Ninette, she thought pathetic, described her as a poor, frightened-looking creature 'who had the appearance of always expecting but never thinking to avoid, a blow'. As for Leah, who appeared a little later, her account is best kept in her own words. 'The door suddenly opened. A tall haggard-faced woman clothed from neck to heels in a scarlet robe fastened only at the throat, and with a monkish cowl hanging down the back, glided slowly towards us. Her huge dark eyes never left mine. In my overwrought state I was fascinated by them. I felt as if I were gazing over a black abyss.'

They had arrived to help in the Great Work and they both signed the Oath of Affiliates:

I, willing to abide within the Abbey of Thelema, make Oath and sing: that I do utterly deny, abjure and contemn all allegiance soever to all gods and men, accepting the Law of Thelema as my sole Law:

that I affirm *The Book of the Law* to be the Word of Truth and the Rule of Life:

that I dedicate myself utterly and without stint my body and soul to the Great Work which is to proclaim and execute the Law of Thelema:

that I will accept unquestionably and irrevocably the conditions of life in the Abbey of Thelema, and uphold its ordinances and customs (as declared in the Books LII, CI, CXCIV¹) and maintain the authority of the Scarlet Woman and of Her Lord The Beast 666.

Witness mine Hand: Betty Loveday Raoul Loveday

On the same day, the Beast admitted Raoul as a Probationer of the A:A:, and he took the name of Aud, meaning 'magical

1 Books 52, 101, and 194 are *The Manifesto of the O.T.O.*; An Open Letter to those who may wish to join the Order; An Intimation with Reference to the Constitution of the Order. They are all published in Volume III, No. 1 of The Equinox. See page 222.

light'. He had now put his feet upon the path of magick and the ascent towards the Stars. 'Tis magick, magick, that has ravished me,' he wrote in an essay entitled 'Ravishment'.

While his wife moped and complained about the inadequate food, the lack of sanitary arrangements, and the oppressive presence of the Beast, he approved of everything and seems to have enjoyed himself, at least to begin with. He wrote this account of the Abbey:

The town itself is most lovely, a huddle of high lemon-coloured houses lying between the paws of a titanic rock fashioned roughly like a crouching lion. One of the inhabitants guided us, for it was dusk when we arrived, to the steep hill outside the town on which stands the Abbey. The first thing that we noticed was the words, *Do what thou wilt shall be whole of the Law*, painted on the main door of the white low house before us. Since this is the password of those within the Abbey, and their invariable greeting, it should be said and understood at once that it upholds not the fulfilment of what one thinks one wants, but of what one ought to think one wants; of the true will.

The door led into the 'Temple', a large square room, out of which the other five rooms open. We noticed at once a Pompeian censer of bronze and a six-sided altar standing in the centre of a magick circle that was painted on the tiled floor. Very tired after the journey, we went to bed almost at once, to be awakened at dawn by the beating of a tom-tom and the chanting of the watchword of the Abbey. Soon we had joined the others outside on the olive-green hill, where all stretched out arms to the Sun and cried: 'Hail unto Thee who art Ra in Thy rising, even unto Thee who art Ra in Thy strength; who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the uprising of the Sun... Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Night.' I cannot easily express my feeling of exultation as I stood there inhaling the sweet morning air through which the song went up to a sun golden, shining ... and I had left London hooded in the thickest, greasy fog.

The rest of the morning, like others, was spent in shopping and cooking and typing by the women and chiefly in writing by the two men, myself and The Beast. For the number 666, which

1 Betty would get up early to wash naked at the pump in the courtyard. One day she looked round and saw the grinning face of 'the Mystic'. is magically attributed to the Sun, is also that of 'The Beast', who holds himself the vehicle of the Sun's energy.

The keen air had made me tremendously hungry for the midday meal of meat, fruit and sharp Sicilian wine; and as I found this repast was always eaten in silence, there was every chance to satisfy the appetite, to appease the digestion, and to exercise the brain. We spent our first afternoon in a way to which I would introduce all those who think the inmates of these Abbeys of Thelema spend their time in loafing and unwholesome amusement; for it was passed in climbing the great Rock. The Beast, being a mountaineer of note, led, on the rope, and we other two pulled and wormed ourselves after him, up a blind buttress of the sheer rock; up and up to where the old town with its Temple of Jupiter and its Baths of Diana lies beautifully crumbled. High tea on our ravenous return; then came the ritual of the Pentagram.

This consisted of intoning with vibrant intensity at the four cardinal points the traditionally holy names of God and His archangels. The primary object is to exclude evil influences by shutting oneself up, as it were, in a consecrated square, filled and fortified with the nine Names. The rite was followed by the reading (which was taken in turn) of the 'Gnostic Collects'. They are invocations of the Higher. The idea is to exalt the mind by poetic appeal to the Forces of Nature; such as that to the Moon, which was hymned in these words: 'Lady of Night that turning ever about us art now visible and now invisible in Thy season, be thou favourable to hunters and lovers, and to all men that toil upon the earth, and to all mariners upon the sea.'

Talk and chess and a little mandolin-strumming followed, and at about nine o'clock we all went to bed, to read or sleep at choice.

The next afternoon was a little wet for serious climbing, so The Beast proposed a game of Thelema. I followed him to the side of the house and found there a small stone courtyard marked out roughly like a fives court but without side walls. The game itself resembled rugby fives, but was played with an ordinary football; and any part of the body, from head to feet, could be used to get the ball up. The result is that the game is more skilful than fives, if less fast, and one set fagged us both, so that we were glad enough when a break came through the arrival of Hermes and Dionysus. These, it may perhaps be said.

were not the gods of that ilk 'invoked to visible appearance', but the two children, one of five and the other of six years, who are characters in The Drug Fiend, which is making such a stir in London. The Beast thought fit to take them climbing on an isolated pinnacle of rock that was near at hand, and the rest of us went along to watch. I had already been slightly astonished at their invariable barefootedness and at the independence of their doings. But as I watched them climbing I became astounded and admiring. It was not so much the technique of the thing; the dexterity with which those small naked toes fitted themselves into the smallest crannies. It was rather the intelligence which they showed. Nine children out of ten, even if they could have been persuaded to pluck up courage to climb at all, would have trusted to scrambling and Fortune to get them up. Not so these. Holds for hands and foot were sought, found and tested before any step was taken. There was a deliberate coolness and self-reliance about the whole affair which gave me an insight into the value of 'Do what thou wilt' as a rule for the training of children.

The rest of the week passed in a like manner. It was the sheer physical healthiness and enjoyment of it all that struck us most. It was so different to what friends with bated breath had told us to expect before we left London. And now England seems too far off even for us to shudder at the idea of ever having to return. We have found wisdom.

Crowley's views on society have something in common with Plato's. Philosopher-Kings are the rulers of Plato's Republic; those who have found their True Wills, the leaders of Crowley's Utopia. The 'multifarious group' in the Platonic state were to find their happiness in knowing their function and accepting their inferior but nevertheless valuable position. In the Crowleian system, the bulk of humanity, not having found their True Wills, will be powerless or, to put it in another way, they will be the slaves of those who have. The True-Willers will keep them in order and supply them with their happiness. Compared with their equals in the Republic, they are in an inferior and less secure position.

The children of the Abbey were observed to see what kind of citizens they would turn out to be. They were left to find their own way or their own True Wills, and no effort was made to persuade them to do this or that. Crowley, in a letter to Sister Grimaud (Helen Parsons), dated October 1944 – he was then sixty-nine –

wrote, 'As we had more than one mother, there was one stringent rule: that a child who wanted anything might apply to anyone in the Abbey except his own mother . . . As you are well aware, I have been for many years totally insane, and the best judges seem to agree that on the whole this suits my peculiar style of beauty.'

The children were free to witness the sex rites of the new religion. They were, in fact, a privileged audience, because Crowley was of the opinion, through his misunderstanding of psychoanalysis, that such spectacles, imprinted on the mind of the child, would help to by-pass the miseries of 'repression'.

Crowley, apparently, did not consider that a child might need authority in order to be able to dispense with it later, and that enlightened authority might be a better method of child education than absolute freedom. Also, he did not disclose what set of principles were to be employed to recognise anyone's True Will, and what should be done if True Wills clashed. He may have been of the opinion that True Wills cannot clash for they are essentially pacific.

If one can believe Alma Hirsig (Marion Dockerill), the two little boys, Hansi and Howard, running about the Abbey looking for their True Wills, never found them, or if they did, they were nasty little wills. Of Leah's child, she says:

He contracted the cigarette habit at the age of five and was such a 'fiend' you never saw him without one in his mouth. He was growing weak, ill, stunted, in spite of all his outdoor life and primitive ways. 'You just leave me alone!' he shouted, brandishing a stick. 'Don't you know I am Beast Number Two and can shatter you? I will, too! I will throw you into the ocean. I am getting ready to be the Great Beast of the Apocalypse when Crowley dies, and I'm going to split the world wide open.'

The Lovedays settled into the Abbey. Raoul occupied the post of High Priest formerly held by Brother Genesthai, and Betty helped with the chores. In a description of one rite, Crowley calls Raoul the Chief Magician.

The Head of the Abbey, says Betty May, was the only person allowed to use the word 'I'. Everybody else had to say 'one' instead. As a penance for breaking this rule, they had to cut themselves upon the arm, one stroke for each 'I', and they were each given a cut-throat razor for that purpose. This was a means of 'flattening the ego', not to induce humility but to develop spiritually according to Crowley's philosophy in which the ego or

consciousness is regarded as a hindrance. Betty contemptuously threw her razor away but Raoul used his and soon both arms were as covered with cuts as Victor Neuburg's had been after 'one week of avoiding the first person' (see the photograph of Neuburg's arms in *The Equinox*). According to Betty, it was loss of blood through careless egoism which helped to undermine Raoul's none-too-vigorous health.

The men shaved their heads, leaving a phallic forelock, the women dyed theirs red or gold; this was the strict thelemic hair style. The forelock was symbolic of the magical energy of Horus or of the horns of Pan,¹ the red or gold hair emblematic of the Scarlet Woman. The women wore a loose flowing robe of bright blue which hung from neck to ankle, the sleeves widening from shoulder to wrist. This garment was lined with scarlet, provided with a hood and a golden girdle. And everyone, of course, kept a magical diary which had to be shown to the Beast.

Neither Crowley nor Raoul had been well for some time. Mysterious attacks had assailed them both, increasing in severity and frequency. The Beast diagnosed the complaint as Mediterranean fever. The local physician, Dr Maggio, described it as an infection of the liver and spleen. Raoul's condition grew steadily worse.

Betty thought that her husband's illness was due to drugs and cat's blood. The cat, Mischette, in her account, had been sacrificed and the blood drunk. Raoul had been poisoned. She was very worried and discussed the matter with the Beast who consulted Frater Aud's horoscope. His expression deepened and grew grim. At that moment Raoul came in and looked over his Master's shoulder.

'It looks as if you might die on the sixteenth of February at four o'clock,' Crowley announced at last.

On Saturday morning, 10 February, the Virgin Guardian of the Sangraal returned from shopping in the town and found Crowley, Betty, Ninette, Jane, and Raoul assembled in the courtyard. A violent quarrel between Betty and Ninette was in progress. Crowley took Betty's side. Jane listened in silence. Raoul was too ill to say anything. Finally, the row, which had risen out of

1 Crowley had an unusual regard for the phallus which he always spelt with a capital P; in the thelemic system, the phallus was God's vicegerent on earth. 'I have been revising the Mark of The Beast ritual,' he wrote, 'but I am not wholly satisfied. The doxology: "Glory be to the Phallus, and to the Sun, and to the Great Wild Beast, as it was, etc."

Betty's calling Ninette a slut, simmered down, and everyone fell in with the Beast's call for greater discipline in the Abbey.

On Sunday, 11 February, a dispute surpassing in fury anything yet witnessed in the Abbey broke out between the Beast and Betty. It appears that Betty was sitting beside her sick husband, quietly reading a London paper when Crowley flounced in and snatched it from her hands. Newspapers were forbidden in the Abbey; they distracted from the Great Work. Leah wrote:

Suddenly I heard the smashing of glass and a knocking about of chairs, etc. Betty had suddenly started to scream and swear and to throw jugs, etc. at the Knight Guardian of the Sacred Lance who was asking her to discuss the situation quietly with him and the rest outside the sick room. There was a lighted oil lamp in the room, also an oil stove. I then went into the room and found Betty kicking the K.G.S.L. who was holding her, she being in violent hysterics. Frater Aud got out of bed, scarcely able to stand. There were bottles and a glass on the bed – they were smashed. I tried to keep him away from these; she rushed to him and after about ten minutes we got him out of the room into a warm quiet one.

Betty began to pack up; she had had enough. Jane tried in vain to dissuade her from leaving. 'Good-bye Raoul. Send down my passport tomorrow,' was her last cry as she fled down the mountain path to Cefalu.

After she had gone, Crowley consulted the Yi King. What attitude should the Abbey take in regard to Betty Loveday? Hexagram XXII. 'Be charming and forgiving, but make it clear that we will stand no nonsense.'

In the morning Jane called on Betty at her Cefalu hotel in the hope of patching things up and bringing her back to the Abbey. They were still arguing about it when Leah arrived with a letter from Raoul.

My most dear Betty,

Let us try to get all this silly business finished. We managed to get on well enough till a few days ago. If you will come back to the Abbey and get yourself under control, and do as I tell you, you will find that things will be all right. Certainly no one wants you to stay away. I won't go to the hospital because the nuns there are mere ornaments and in any case I am not in a fit state to be moved. Moreover, I don't want to go – and

I won't. Write me a note saying if you will come back. If you won't you had better send for your bag. There is no one here to take it. But be a good girl and come.

Always yours,

Raoul

Betty decided to return to the Abbey. She had, however, already posted a letter of complaint about Crowley and his Abbey to the British Consul at Palermo. Later, on the same day, after an all-round reconciliation, she sent a letter of retraction: no, she had not been turned out of the Abbey; she had been ill and hysterical but now that she was calm again she could see clearly that Mr Crowley was 'in full possession of his mental faculties'.

The Beast jotted down in his diary: 'She returned, very penitent and nice. And better.'

'I feel a current of Magical force – heavy, black and silent – threatening the Abbey,' wrote the Beast on Tuesday, 13 February. The next day, Raoul was worse. Dr Maggio was hurriedly summoned. He diagnosed acute enteritis. Crowley sent off a telegram to Loveday's parents, informing them of their son's dangerous condition.

Two days later, on 16 February 1923, Raoul Loveday died. The entry in Crowley's diary says, 'Die \(\text{P}. \) About 4 pm Fra. Aud died of Paralysis of the Heart.' Earlier, the Virgin Guardian of the Sangraal had consulted the Yi King; the Oracle had replied with hexagram XLIX. Dispersion. 'Points clearly to death,' commented Crowley.

Betty May's account differs in detail from the version in *The Confessions*. Both she and the Beast were down in the town at the time of Raoul's death, either bringing the doctor or sending off another cablegram to Raoul's parents. The tension was so great that Betty fainted. The Beast revived her. Together they returned along the mountain path.

The sun was sinking behind the mountain. The Beast stopped and said, 'We will take Adoration.'

He raised his arm, the palm of his hand open towards the sun, made the sign of the Pentagram, cried: 'Hail unto Thee, who art Tum in Thy setting, even unto Thee who art Tum in Thy joy, who travellest over the Heavens in Thy bark at the Down-going of the Sun.

'Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Day!'

This was also a prayer for the dying youth.

Betty observed that tears were streaming down the Beast's cheeks.

They continued on their way but before they reached the Abbey they were met by Leah.

'Is he worse?' asked Betty fearfully.

'He's dead,' replied the Virgin Guardian of the Sangraal.

He lay in bed, Betty said, his arms raised slightly behind his head, the head bent forward; she was reminded of the outline of the 'spirit form' in the photograph taken on their wedding day.

'He died without fear or pain,' wrote Crowley. 'It was as if a man, tired of staying indoors, had gone out for a walk.'

In this incarnation, Frater Aud had done his share of the Great Work. The gods had sent him to earth to guide the Beast at a critical moment of the latter's career – or so Crowley said. He put the point succinctly: 'The moment his work was done, he went out like a match having lighted my cigar.'

Betty held Crowley responsible for Raoul's death. He had not paid Dr Maggio's bill, she said, and therefore the doctor delayed coming to the Abbey; and when he did come it was too late.

The body was placed in a coffin and removed to an outhouse, and all night long Crowley kept vigil, tapping with his wand on the sides of the open coffin and muttering prayers and mantras.

The next morning, the coffin upon a bier was borne from the Abbey. The Beast, clad in a hooded garment of white silk embroidered with gold which stretched to his sandalled feet, led it down the mountain path, followed by the weeping women of the Abbey. On his fingers were the star sapphire ring he had worn in the desert with Victor Neuburg, and his Great Beast ring of an entwined golden snake set with rubies and diamonds. Round his neck hung his topaz Rosy Cross and on his forehead the Abra-Melin golden fillet, bearing within a square the name of the Angel URIEL, meaning Magical force.

The body was buried in the local cemetery. According to Betty May, the news of Loveday's death had quickly spread, and hundreds of peasants had come from the town and the surrounding countryside to witness the High Priest bury his Magical Son.

1 Ninette's little boy, Howard, dressed in a blue silk robe and self-crowned with a wreath of flowers, had hurried on ahead to the cemetery gates where he was found whirling himself about in joyful circles, crying: 'We're going to bury Raoul! We're going to bury Raoul!'

According to Jane Wolfe, a more reliable witness, there were no spectators other than three monks who stood in a distant corner of the cemetery.

'The sun made the white domes of the sepulchres sparkle,' said Betty. 'Away below the cliff the sea dashed itself on the stones. The Mystic stood with his magic wand raised.'

The last rites were as Raoul himself would have wished. Of his own free will he had chosen this creed; he had lived as a Thelemite, he died and was buried as one. "Tis magick, magick, that has ravished me."

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I proclaim the Law of Light, Life, Love and Liberty in the name of IAO.¹ Love is the law, love under will. Lord visible and sensible of whom this earth is but a frozen spark turning about thee with annual and diurnal motion, source of light, source of life, let thy perpetual radiance hearten us to continual labour and enjoyment.

The Beast struck the magick bell, waved the magick wand, and read *The Book of the Law*. Finally, he recited one of the speeches of 'the young John' from his mystery play, *The Ship*, published in No 10 of *The Equinox*.²

I am that I am, the flame Hidden in the sacred ark. I am the unspoken name, I the unbegotten spark.

I am He that ever goeth,
Being in myself the Way;
Known, that yet no mortal knoweth,
Shewn, that yet no mortal sheweth,
I, the child of night and day.
I am never-dying youth.
I am Love, and I am Truth.

I am the creating Word, I the author of the aeon; None but I have ever heard Echo in the empyrean Plectron of the primal paean!

¹ Jehovah, or the initials of Isis-Apophis-Osiris. 2 By Saint Edward Aleister Crowley, 33°, 90°, 96° X°.

I am the eternal one Winged and white, the flowering rod, I the fountain of the sun, Very God of very God!

I am he that lifteth up Life, and flingeth it afar; I have filled the crystal cup; I have sealed the silver star. I the wingless God that flieth Through my firmamental fane, I am he that daily dieth, And is daily born again,

In the sea my father lieth,
Wept by waters, lost for ever
Where the waste of woe replieth:
'Naught and nowhere!' 'Naught and never!'
I that serve as once he served,
I that shine as once he shone,
I must swerve as he has swerved,
I must go as he has gone.

He begat me; in my season I must such a son beget, Suffer too the triple treason, Setting as my father set.

These my witnesses and women—These shall dare the dark again, Find the sacred ark to swim in The remorseless realm of rain.

Flowers and fruits I bring to bless you, Cakes of corn, and wealth of wine; With my crown will I caress you, With my music make you mine.
Though I perish, I preserve you; Through my fall, ye rise above; Ruling you, your priest, I serve you, Being life, and being love.

The ceremony over, the Beast staggered up the mountain to his lair, entered La Chambre des Cauchemars and sank on to the bed.

He felt so ill he thought he was dying. Brother Aud, he remembered, had foreseen it all in a vision. In this vision, he had met an Adept who had prophesied that they were all to go through 'purgings' which obviously referred to his death and the Beast's illness. The purgings were to be followed by the 'fire of persecution' and, finally, there was to be 'a stream flowing into the sea from the West to the East of which the sands are of gold'.

Dr Maggio was summoned. For three weeks Crowley lay prostrate with a temperature of 102°, day and night, Dover's powder, quinine, all his secret remedies from the poppy and the coca plant not helping a bit. Then his condition became more rational, the temperature rising to 104° and sinking, after sweats, to normal. Exactly a month after the funeral, he got up for the first time and ventured outside into the spring sunshine.

The Abbey had shrunk to its three original members: the Beast, the Ape of Thoth, and Sister Cypris. Betty May had left as soon as the British Consul at Palermo had paid her fare home; and Jane Wolfe had quickly followed her to London, as the Beast's emissary, to raise funds and find new pupils.

Betty May was immediately interviewed by the *Sunday Express*, and on 25 February NEW SINISTER REVELATIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY appeared on the front page of that paper. Crowley was too ill and depressed to care about these, or any other, revelations. 'I have been very ill since early January, and am far from well in many ways, though apparently convalescent,' he wrote in his *Magical Record* on 25 March.

The previous attacks of the Sunday Express on Crowley now found their culmination and justification in the death of 'the brilliant young university man'. And behind the Sunday Express came John Bull: this journal called Crowley a Wizard of Wickedness, a title which would have been more applicable to their former editor, the impudent Horatio Bottomley, MP, who, the previous May, had been sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for swindling the public. If Crowley had strangled Loveday, as he was said to have strangled Victor Neuburg's wife, there would be grounds for being shocked, but as the Sunday Express had to admit. Crowley's 'victim' died from natural causes. Crowley observed peevishly, 'There was a description of the Abbey without a single failure to mis-state the facts. If a thing was white they called it red, if square, circular, if stone, brick,' And the reporter of the Sunday Express was wrong when he said that Loveday had not the foggiest idea of what Crowley was really like, and once at the Abbey he found himself trapped. On the contrary, he had sampled Crowley's magick in London, found it to his liking, and gone to Cefalu for a full helping. But did Crowley really care what the *Sunday Express* and *John Bull* said about him? Only when the English gentleman aspect of his character was uppermost. On his first day out of bed, he wrote to Norman Mudd, Raoul's successor:

The death of Loveday started them all over again. They even suggested that he was murdered, and want an investigation. I wish to goodness we could get one; but even if they do, it will be hard to get the results published. Soror Estai found that she could not get the newspapers to print our side of the story for the simple reason that there is nothing sensational about it!

He regarded the whole of the Anglo-Saxon world, with rare exceptions, as moral cowards. He compared himself to Columbus and Darwin, said that the mob has an instinctive dread of a man who dares the unknown.

'We hope,' wrote *John Bull*, 'that the eminent university professor who we know is contemplating proceeding to Cefalu, to "study the Cabbala" with Crowley this spring, will take heed of the true character of the man whose guest he proposes to be.'

Far from taking John Bull's advice, Norman Mudd, MA. lecturer in Applied Mathematics at Grey University College. Bloemfontein, South Africa, gave up his job, proceeded straight to Cefalu and saluted the Beast, his 'Lord and Master', with the enthusiasm of a man who thinks that he is at last really getting somewhere. He arrived on 22 April 1923, and handed Crowley his savings as a mark of respect and affection. And hard on his heels came two Oxford undergraduates, John Pinney and Claud Bosanquet, of Christ Church and New College respectively; they wished to investigate the circumstances of the death of their friend and fellow student or, as Crowley put it, to spy on him and report back to anyone who wanted to know. 'Mudd arrived yesterday,' wrote the Beast, 'also two Oxford boys. Jolly party.' Although still ill, he dragged himself about the rock to point out to Raoul's friends the way to climb 'Cavern Pitch' and 'Deep Gill pillar'. 'They succeeded in climbing both to my great joy.'

The black magical current was still sweeping on the Beast and through the Abbey. The next day another blow fell. Crowley was summoned to the Cefalu police station and told that they must all leave Italian territory. An order from the Minister of the Interior

lay on the desk. No explanation was given and, as Crowley observed, no accusation was made.

The Beast remained calm. 'All of us?' he asked.

'Yes,' replied the police official.

'May I see the order?'

It was handed to him.

'But this mentions only me,' said Crowley. 'It says nothing about the others.'

The policeman hurriedly re-read the order. He had to agree that Crowley was right.

The Beast asked for a week's grace to arrange his affairs and pack up. This was granted.

They saluted each other and Crowley departed with a heavy heart. This was a stab in the back indeed. Was his life's work ruined? He must consult the *Yi King*. What course should he adopt? Where would the Secret Chiefs send him now? He was in their hands entirely.

The regime of Mussolini had arrived. Secret societies, centres of dissension, had been outlawed in Italy during the previous year. The Grand Master of the Grand Orient of Italy, Domizio Torregiani, was banished for five years to the Lipari Isles. And the Grand Master of the Knights of the Holy Ghost, of the O.T.O., and the A.A., about whom the Italian authorities had recently read so much in the London papers, could go home or to some other place, out of Italy.

What was the general symbol of the present situation? Hexagram XLVII. Constraint. And what was the best course of action to adopt? Prepare to move. Be steady. Prepare to reconstruct. Seek relief from friends. Accept substantial assistance. Turn the situation to advantage by increasing sympathisers. 'There should be an unexpectedly large number of such ready to help us.'

Should they make a direct protest to the Minister of the Interior? If so, what should they say? The Chinese Oracle was unfailing. *Thwan*. Yes. They should state their case systematically. Press the matter. Beware of divided counsels. Retire in order to advance. Refute all falsehoods about themselves. Make it clear that they represent a widespread and important movement.

Should they make an appeal to their national Ambassadors in Rome? Yes, but don't expect much result.

1 According to Charles Gray, he, Gray, was responsible for Crowley's expulsion from Italy. On Pinney's return from Cefalu, he brought him and Peter Rodd together. Rodd's father was British Ambassador

Meanwhile, where should the Beast go? The Oracle told him to cross the water. Africa would be very favourable. What part of Africa? The coast or some well-watered spot, but isolated, difficult of access, and where there is indifference to public affairs.

On 1 May 1923, the Beast with his Scarlet Woman left Cefalu and arrived at Palermo, where he had a mild breakdown. The next day he crossed the Mediterranean to Tunis, a detective shadowing him to the very boat and even mingling with the passengers on board – or so Leah thought – to see that he did, in fact, leave Italian territory. Professor Norman Mudd, MA or, to give him his magical title in the Great White Brotherhood of Light, Frater Omnia Pro Veritate, Brother All for Truth, was left in charge of the Abbey and to carry on the Great Work.

It was said that the inhabitants of Cefalu were very sorry to hear of the expulsion of the Beast. He had livened up their little town considerably.

23 NORMAN MUDD, A PROBATIONER OF THE A \therefore A \therefore

THE people who played a part in Crowley's life and who followed in his tracks about the fitful earth are all, with hardly any exception, obscure. Who, for example, was Norman Mudd? His only claim to remembrance is that he knew Aleister Crowley. His shade appears out of oblivion and shouts the names of the Beast and the Scarlet Woman, Alostrael, who seems to trouble him greatly; then he is gone.

The talented son of a schoolmaster of very modest means, he went up to Cambridge from Manchester on a mathematics scholarship. In July 1907, he entered Trinity, the college which, nine years before, had welcomed Crowley. He made friends with an older undergraduate who was a member of the Cambridge University Freethought Association, and the spiritual guide of a group of students who wrote poetry and discussed magic and called themselves the Pan Society. This older undergraduate was Victor Neuburg.

Now, Neuburg boasted of his friendship with the Great Magician Aleister Crowley; and one day during December 1907, this Great Magician, who had just got back from tramping the North African desert with the Earl of Tankerville, turned up at Cambridge. There were strange rings¹ on his fingers and a faraway gaze in his eyes; he had gathered wisdom in the distant East and was said to be an outstanding poet and mountaineer as well.

The 18-year-old scholar, Norman Mudd, who was a short and very plain youth, much depressed by feelings of worthlessness, was fascinated. To his great joy, this Magician seemed to like him and did not mind talking to him for hours and walking about Cambridge with him. 'From then until the middle of 1910, I enjoyed quite unclouded the delights of your knowledge and conversation,' he wrote in a memoir compiled in later years and addressed to the Beast. Elsewhere he wrote of his meeting and friendship with Crowley:

1 Crowley would point to a ring with a large red stone which adorned his hand and say, 'Before Charles I laid his head on the block, he took off this ring and gave it to Bishop Juxon'.

in Rome, and Gray persuaded Rodd to communicate with him. 'I believe that it was the result of representations made by Sir Rennel Rodd that Crowley was expelled,' wrote Mr Gray to me in January 1952, after he had read *The Great Beast*.

I then understood for the first time what life was or might be; and the spark of that understanding has been in me ever since, apparently unquenchable, working always (consciously or unconsciously), in spite of all my failures, betrayals, baseness, and desperate absorption in worldly matters, always reviving again when I least expected it, always potent by the challenge of its mere presence to convert instantly all other aims and ambitions into dust and ashes.

Those who are different are dangerous and Crowley was very different. Although the college authorities did not like Crowley's being put up in Trinity, and his reading of papers on magic to the students in their rooms, they would have done nothing about it – Crowley, after all, was a member of the college – had they not received one day a letter from somebody accusing him of paederasty and of being 'watched by the police of Europe' on that score.

In January 1909, Mudd was summoned to wait on the Revd Reginald St John Parry, DD, the Dean of Trinity, and these demands were made to him. One, that he cease distributing copies of a book called *The Star in the West* by Captain Fuller or any of Crowley's own works. Two, that the invitation sent to Crowley by the Cambridge University Freethought Association, of which Mudd was secretary, be cancelled forthwith, as the Dean 'could not permit an Association in which Trinity men were concerned to extend an official welcome to men of evil repute'.

But Mudd was not prepared to drop his hero so easily, and the Freethought Association (most of whose members were not, anyhow, of Trinity) were indignant at the Dean's demands. The Revd Dr Parry had raised a matter of principle. A meeting of the Association was called. The members had supporters among the dons and they decided to fight for their rights. The following resolution, unanimously carried, was their reply:

The Association having taken into consideration the request made to it by the Dean of Trinity regrets that it finds itself unable to comply with that request. It regards the right to invite down any person it thinks fit as essential to its principles and wishes to point out that its attitude towards any opinions advocated before it is purely critical.

The Revd Dr Parry replied by stating his objection to Crowley in more specific terms. He did not object to Crowley's talks on magic but to his 'sexual ethics'.

Crowley, who was kept informed of every step by the devoted Mudd, replied by writing to Mudd's father and raising the same suspicions about the Revd Dr Parry's sexual ethics as Parry had raised about his.

I find myself compelled to write to you about a very painful and delicate matter. Your son is a friend of mine, and I am unspeakably shocked to find that his tutor has the reputation of indulging in things so abominable that among decent people they have not even a name. I do not suggest for one moment that there is a grain of truth in the rumours which circulate about him; but I put it to you: is it wise to leave your son in the charge of a man whose name is the focus for suspicion, however ill-founded?

The struggle between the Dean of Trinity and the Freethought Association lasted throughout 1909 and into 1910, the year that saw the publication of Crowley's *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*, a collection of lewd verse, with ironic notes, on the theme of paederasty and its joys. And during the whole of this time Crowley continued to appear at Cambridge and be entertained by his undergraduate friends at Trinity and other colleges.

Parry admitted that he was afraid of libelling Crowley who, he knew, was only waiting for one false step on his part to move into the attack. It was also possible that Parry was nervous of Crowley as a magician. His appearance was uncanny and his powers were said to be supernormal. One of the dons had seen him put out a candle at 10 yards' distance by willing it to go out.

To break the deadlock, the Beast, one day in 1910, went to see the Dean and bluntly asked him what accusations he had to make against him. Parry at least suggested his objection. The meeting was stormy and Crowley was unable to announce a victory. His account of what followed is clear enough. 'On the following morning I waited in the Great Court for him to come out of Chapel and called him a liar to his face in front of everybody.'

By this act Crowley did indeed break the deadlock, but the result was not favourable to him. He was banned from Trinity, and orders were given to the porters to remove him if he should

^{1 &#}x27;Good, I shan't be burgled,' was Crowley's comment when he was told that the police were watching him.

ever again set foot within the precincts. And expulsions were threatened all round for those Trinity men who continued to have anything more to do with Crowley.

Poor Mudd. He was poor in both senses of the word. Scholarship had brought him to Cambridge, not fees paid by his parents. He had set his heart on an academic career and 'was utterly dependent for this upon, at least, the tolerance of the College authorities'. Further, his parents were in debt to the extent of several hundred pounds for the expenses of his education.

It was all very well for Crowley to point out that Mudd was 'the hope of the College for the forthcoming Tripos' and that the Dean would think twice about sending Mudd down. The matter had now gone far beyond that stage and everyone, except Crowley, knew it.

Filled with grief and shame, Norman Mudd did what he was told; he resigned from the Freethought Association, wrote a letter of apology to the Dean and promised on 'his honour as a gentleman' to hold no further communication of any kind whatever with Mr Aleister Crowley. But so strong was Crowley's fascination for him that he continued to correspond with Crowley in secret, and on one occasion in 1911, when he heard that Crowley was being entertained in Caius College by an undergraduate called Arthur Kirk, and that his distinguished friend was inquiring for him, he screwed up his courage and went to Kirk's rooms 'just to shake hands'.

'I must confess that I went in ludicrous fear and trembling of discovery,' he wrote some years afterwards.

Although Crowley would not admit it, he had been defeated, as he was bound to be. The whole affair was a stupid tilting at authority and embroiling of others in his quarrels. The ban against his entering Trinity remained, and his name, hitherto on the College register as a Member of the University, dropped out for the succeeding year. His last gesture in this adventure was to write on the notepaper of The Equinox, with the Eye of Horus within the Sun-blaze embossed at its head, this letter to the highest authority of Trinity.

To the Revd the Master of Trinity.

Dear Master.

For three years you stood to me in loco parentis, and that I was a worthy child is evidenced by the fact that I never suffered rebuke or punishment from any of the College Authorities.

To that paternity I now appeal for justice in the following circumstances.

Since leaving Cambridge in 1898 I have travelled all over the world on one single business, the search for Truth.

This truth I believe that I have found: it may be stated in the thesis following:

By development of will-power, by rigorous self-control, by solitude, meditation and prayer, a man may be granted the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel: this being attained, the man may safely confide himself to the Guardianship: and that this attainment is the most sublime privilege of man.

It seemed to me a prime duty to tell others of the results of my search; and I naturally began in the University, and especially in the College which had sheltered me for those three years, to which I look back with greater pleasure than to any other part of my career.

To my surprise, I found myself regarded with great suspicion by some of the College Authorities. They even used methods which seemed to me at the same time high-handed and underground. In particular, the Revd St J. Parry endeavoured to poison the minds of some of my friends by insinuating certain things against me. But as he was afraid to say what these dreadful accusations were, his interference was useless to his purpose. I confronted him, ready to defend myself against any accusations and to make clear the purity of my intention, or even to give him an undertaking to fulfil any request of his that I could conscientiously comply with; but he refused to discuss the matter, and I regret to say that he so far forgot his obligations to God as to lie to me, and that I so far forgot my duty to him as to tell him that he lied.

The matter then lapsed, and I continued my teaching. The campaign of anonymous and whispered slander, however, continued. This term I learn that the College Council have ordered the doors of the College to be shut against my gallant friend Captain J. F. C. Fuller and myself, that any member of the College found in communication with me will be expelled forthwith, that no member of the College may belong to any society with which I am in any way connected - measures, in short, sayouring alike of panic and of the Inquisition.

That you, dear Master, can be a consenting party to such measures is unthinkable.

I have always been refused to be heard in my defence, or even to hear of what nature are the accusations against me. However, some indication of their nature has leaked out. They are as false as they are abominable; could I track their author he would assuredly receive a sentence of some years' imprisonment at the hands of His Majesty's Judges, who hear evidence, and judge according to its weight, without fear or favour.

But the Council of Trinity College prefers the methods of the Council of Ten.

I here profess myself willing and anxious to submit myself to the judgement of any tribunal public or private that you may nominate, provided that I am allowed to obtain legal advice and representation, and that the ordinary Rules of Evidence are maintained.

I ask that, should my character be cleared, the Council of the College will rescind its Order; and promise that in the other event I will cease all relations with undergraduate members of the College.

Awaiting with the utmost hope and confidence a favourable reply from your justice and paternal affection.

I beg to subscribe myself, dear Master, Yours faithfully, Aleister Crowley

What the Revd Henry Montagu Butler, DD, the Master of Trinity, replied to this letter, if he did reply, I do not know. The matter, however, was closed at last, and he was not going to reopen it. We can only try to guess what he thought of Aleister Crowley, and of his Holy Guardian Angel and the Conversation they had had with each other recently.

Ten years later on the night of 7 June 1920, Crowley dreamed, while in bed at the Abbey with Leah Hirsig, that he was back in Cambridge, and that the new Master of Trinity had asked him to lunch.

The rest of Mudd's autobiographical sketch is like the diary of a girl languishing under an unrequited love. Cut off from the man who had won his admiration and his love, he felt his existence to be merely a living ache. He described his attachment to the Beast as a conflict of fascination and disgust, hope and fear. The heart had gone out of him and he spent his last, most important, year at Cambridge browsing on books about magic and Buddhism. As

a result he failed to get either of the two prizes which would have given him the academic career he desired and for which he had long been preparing, that of star-gazing at Greenwich Observatory. Instead, he was offered a post at the National Physical Laboratory, or one in South Africa. He seized the opportunity of going abroad; he hoped it would help him forget Aleister Crowley. He arrived in South Africa in July 1911 and was put in sole charge of the Department of Applied Mathematics at Grey University College, Bloemfontein.

During the years that followed Mudd reproached Crowley for his failures.

I have been connected with you by a barrier of separation. The whole relation is paradoxical and in nothing more than this: that I have been unable to draw any strength or peace from the thought of you. You have been right at the centre of a complex resting on fear and the knowledge of failure. Any encouragement you have since tried to give me has simply *discouraged* and demoralized me . . . In short, I have only been able to work at all by forgetting you.

He went to South Africa to start life afresh but he failed. New skies solved none of his emotional problems; he grew no roots, found no happiness. And, to crown all, in 1915, he lost the sight of one eye. The loss is ascribed to an accident; it was, in fact, due to a gonorrhoeal infection.

The account of his years in South Africa makes dismal reading. By his own account, his very centre was poisoned. 'The thought of Crowley, was really a demoralizing obsession,' he confessed to Frater Achad.

Unable to go forward to a new life, he slid back to the old. While Crowley was in America, he wrote to all his old London and Paris addresses in an unsuccessful attempt to find him. Finally, during the latter half of 1920, while on a sabbatical year's vacation, he came to England with the intention of looking for him among the habitués of the Café Royal and the denizens of Soho and Chelsea. The soil of England, his mother country, had a steadying effect upon Professor Norman Mudd. In London he almost forgot about Crowley. 'I simply loafed about doing my pleasure among the living.' Then, one day in a bookshop, he caught sight of Perdurabo's *Book Four*, and this he said, woke him up.

Captain Fuller was the one person, Mudd reasoned, who would

know where the Beast was. He was on the point of getting in touch with him when he discovered a copy of the 'blue' *Equinox* and learned from that that Crowley had been in America. Without waiting to know if he had since returned and gone elsewhere, Mudd set sail for the United States to hunt for Crowley amid the scandals he had left behind in Detroit.

His longing for Crowley had returned vehemently, and he now looked upon the Beast as his last hope. 'I did not know what was the matter with me except that I was suffering from a morbid impotence to get going, and that I needed to see you again to be cured,' he wrote to Crowley when he had at last discovered where he was. 'Not finding you [in America] was a great blow to my hopes.'

'I hope you will drop in at our Abbey where we can fry you in your own fat much quicker than elsewhere,' replied the Beast. 'Be on your guard!'

24 IN EXILE

CROWLEY'S expulsion from Italy closed a chapter in his life. The event was entirely unexpected and, at the time, he did not realize what it meant. It was all very well for him to move over to the next spot with the intention of carrying on as before, and of moving back as soon as possible, but what has once been lost all eternity will not return. The wave that had rolled him over the Atlantic sped him on to Cefalu. It was the rhythm of the one event and its fullness was reached with the death of Loveday. Now the tide was going out and on it, in his frail barque, floated Alastor de Kerval, the Wanderer of the Waste. He looked not outwards but backwards to the receding shore, his gaze fixed upon his Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum, which grew smaller and smaller until it disappeared altogether.

The Beast and the Scarlet Woman were staying at a little hotel called Au Souffle du Zéphir in Marsa, a suburb of Tunis – 'one could not find anything cheaper'. Norman Mudd and Ninette Shumway guarded the Abbey over the waters. Mudd, who had given up organising a school of astronomy for the University of South Africa in order to join Crowley, was sitting in La Chambre des Cauchemars and staring at his Master's schizoid paintings which covered the walls. But, judging from his letters, he was quite happy among these nightmarish surroundings. He was with his Beloved Father again, and the void in his heart was filled. The Beast's letters to his Beloved Son, as he addressed Mudd, are full of kindness and hope. Together they will pull through everything that is to be pulled through, and meanwhile the Great Work has to go on.

Mudd fully realized the responsibilities of his position. He had unfortunately only one eye to see out of, but with it he saw more, as Probationer of the A:A: than ever he had seen with two as Professor of Applied Mathematics at Bloemfontein. His old and good friend, Harry Doughty, did not think so but neither he nor the Revd Reginald St John Parry, DD, nor Mudd's saddened parents (who had not caught a glimpse of their son for the previous seven years and who had been deeply hurt that he should have gone to Cefalu instead of coming to see them), could see into the heart of Norman Mudd.

To Doughty, Mudd's whole relationship with Crowley was a mystery and his reasons for suddenly darting off to Cefalu instead of coming on to England as arranged were hopelessly inadequate. Doughty was a sincere friend of Mudd and he gave him some sound advice, 'Why don't you get to business – and love and the law be damned?' he asked, just as a quarter of a century later Norman Douglas replied to Crowley's chant of 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law,' with 'To hell with all laws!'

Mudd replied: 'I was called (or so I did, and do, believe) to devote everything that I am, and have, or can do or learn to do, to the performance of a task on which the fortunes of humanity for the next few thousand years largely depend.'

Doughty, not being a Thelemite, was unmoved:

You might make my apologies to Mr Crowley for failing to reply to his letters. I do not know quite what to make of this gentleman. He begins by trying to borrow money from me and works up to the stage of offering to be my guide, philosopher and friend - thus neatly reversing the usual procedure. He is evidently concerned about my indifference or obtuseness, or whatever it is, and is anxious to make me understand his aims. I must confess that his lengthy letter in explanation of these did not either illuminate or excite me. Possibly, as he suggests, you might be able to make things clearer by use of the conventional language of mathematics: certainly the unconventional language of enthusiasm leaves me cold. Apparently he who would, cannot, and he who might, will not. I am surprised at Mr Crowley's naïvety in certain respects. He professes to be an expert in the diagnosis of genius and coolly suggests that if I run across any wayward disappointed genius who is beating his ineffectual wings, I should send him along for cure and comfort. Now, I gather from your own case and other things I have heard that Crowley is a man capable of exercising a peculiar degree of power and fascination over others. Whether it be for good or ill I have no means of knowing; but to assume that I would take it for granted as the former on his own unsupported assurance argues a simplicity on his part (or belief in my own credulity) which astonishes me.

Harry Doughty, beyond any question, was made of different stuff from Norman Mudd, but he had even less hope of persuading his friend to drop the Beast than had the Revd Dr Parry some thirteen years earlier. Crowley's hopes were set upon a rescindment of the order of expulsion from Italian territory, but Mussolini gave him no interview to discuss the matter, and as the summer advanced he became embroiled in other problems. There was, for example, the Comment on *The Book of the Law* to write, and his autobiography to be continued and concluded. Mudd, who had published a paper entitled *The Gravitational Potential and Energy of Harmonic Deformations of any Order*, could help with the mathematical part of the Comment, and discover, for example, the meaning of this line: 'Every number is infinite; there is no difference.'

The problem of finding money had grown more acute, because there were now two establishments to be maintained. Any letter, particularly from strangers, was promptly and sympathetically answered in the hope that the writer would turn out to be a supporter. A Mr Robert Trodd wrote to say that it was his will to meet Mr Crowley, having read all about him in the *Sunday Express*: 'Do as thou wilt is the whole of the Law.' Unfortunately Mr Trodd was unknown in wealthy or artistic circles, etc. 'P.S. Is Magick real? What of the Child?'

Crowley replied: 'Dear Sir, Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. (You wrote "as" for "what" and "is" for "shall be".) Damn wealthy and artistic circles! "Every man and every woman is a star." I am pledged to do my utmost for any one who comes to me, without thought of return of any kind...'

Mr Trodd was advised to get in touch immediately with Jane Wolfe who was still in London. He was assured that Magick was very real. As for the Child, that was too recondite a subject for discussion in a letter. 'Yours fraternally, The Beast 666.'

On 19 May at 7.26 am Ninette gave birth to another baby. The Beast congratulated her and selected these names for the child: Isabella Isis Selene Hecate Artemis Diana Hera Jane. He also cast the baby's horoscope. '... Mars, rising above Luna, is rather threatening but there are no close bad aspects either to the Sun or Moon, so probably there is not much to worry about. There is no big complex to make the child distinguished. She is likely to develop into a fairly ordinary little whore.'

Crowley was ill, cut off from his Abbey, short of money, and uncertain of the future. The visions that floated before his eyes when the stem of the opium pipe was to his lips or when he was enthused with cocaine or heroin were closely analysed. And lying in bed in the Souffle du Zéphir he studied *The Book of the Law* for a way out of his difficulties as closely as Lenin had studied the

writings of Karl Marx for solutions to some of the pressing problems of the Revolution. 'Here is the point where your "love" is wanted,' he wrote to Mudd who was holding on in the Abbey over the water. 'I can trust you because you once wrote that it didn't matter a fart whether I lived or died.'

Two solutions finally offered themselves to him. He, the Logos of the Aeon, should fade for a short time into the background, while Alostrael succeeded in getting her magical ability into working order. Then, in the role of Semiramis, she should assume despotic political power, but derived of course from him and dependent upon him. 'The world is obviously ripe for the appearance of a female ruler of this kind,' he commented.

The other solution was more straightforward. The Book of the Law contains this verse: 'There cometh a rich man from the West who shall pour his gold upon thee.' The Beast could do nothing about this rich man but wait till he arrived. 'Well, I don't mind. I'm perfectly happy waiting,' he wrote. 'I merely wish to remind the Gods that – for many considerations – this attitude shows my complete dependence upon them.'

The means by which Crowley hoped to bring himself back to health will probably sound absurd to those who have no faith in magic. His first disciple, J. F. C. Fuller, should walk with him to Egypt by way of 'the City' (i.e. Tunis) where he was now writing the Comment on *Liber Legis* and 'abstract' from the Cairo Museum the original stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, and help carry it to Boleskine. Since Crowley no longer owned that house, it would have to be repurchased. 'Fuller's main task is to bring me back to health by means of this journey.'

Meanwhile, both he and Leah grew worse in health and were obliged to put themselves under the care of a local doctor called Thomas Domela – 'to hell with my personal pride'.

The Beast rarely doubted his greatness but while thrashing around for a way out of these present difficulties, he regarded his genius from a new angle. He thought he was more of a psychologist or spiritual leader than a magician in the sense of a miracleworker.

'I have doubted as to whether I am such a great Magician after all, even while smiling at the doubts of people who seemed to expect me to bewitch cattle,' he wrote in his *Magical Diary* at 5.00 pm on 27 May 1923. 'I have just discovered the complete answer to both of us. I possess the power of causing spiritual crises. This is of course the only thing that ever happened. Pro-

duce your crisis in your man and the rest follows... People instinctively recognise this power in me and are scared. *John Bull* is perfectly right.'

At times, during this distressful period, his mind began to wander. 'I may be a Black Magician, but I'm a bloody great one.' Again, 'Mme. Fatima Crowley! That's about all I'm fit for – to wiggle my leg in the air!' But this self-derision was only an attempt to surmount his despair. Finally, he would write to Trotsky in Russia suggesting he should be put in charge of a world-wide campaign for eradicating Christianity, or to George V, his King, with proposals for a religious crusade.

He was still taking heroin but in smaller doses and with greater intervals. He pulled himself together with ether instead. Ether, he found, was useful to him when dictating the 'Hag' because it emphasised his mood. The disadvantages of ether was that it made one reach 'so deeply into the elements of things that it is hard to make the connection'. But ether helped him in his struggle against heroin.

He sent a cable to O.P.V. to come to him at once.

After three months in Tunis and no apology having arrived from the Italian Government, the Beast began to think of refounding the Abbey in another place. An island would be the best spot. Zembra, off Tunis, for instance. The new Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum should not repeat the mistakes of the old. To begin with it would have to be of severe monastic type. Access to the island by motor launch or seaplane. Funds would be raised by persuading capitalists of 'the coming smash'. Only Thelemites would be accepted as members and they must possess one of these classes of attributes: (a) beauty, intelligence, love; (b) business capacity, all-round adaptability; (c) wealth or physical strength; (d) rare magical gifts. The government of the community would be autocratic. Crowley was to be the Outer Head of the Order, but 'he will be as inaccessible as possible; and, if practicable, the fact of his headship will be unknown to all but his intimate officers.'

He decided to go on a Magical Retirement. To ensure his greatest possible detachment from external affairs during this Retirement, he drew up with Mudd's assistance a document in Mudd's name in which it is announced that Norman Mudd was in sole charge of the affairs of 'Mr E. A. Crowley, the Beast 666'. Having done this, he left the Scarlet Woman in the cheap lodgings, Au Souffle du Zéphir, and went to stay at the Tunisia Palace, the

best hotel in the town, taking with him Mohammed ben Brahim, a negro boy whom he had trained as his personal and magical servant. After a good night's sleep, he conceived the idea of running up a big bill at the jeweller's for a Jewel of the Order, and springing it on Mudd as a test of his faith in him. The jewel he had in mind was a Black Diamond or Pearl in the centre of a golden plate, engraved with the Holy Names in Greek and Hebrew. This jewel was to be encircled with platinum, the gold symbolising the Sun, and the platinum, the Moon, of his changing nature.

The utter uselessness of the extravagance completely exonerates me from any selfish luxury; also that the bill would include a number of decorations for other people. And the test would have all the quality of surprise, as I have calculated coppers continually since O.P.V. came to me, and he knows my conscientious reluctance to spend money, even small change, on luxuries, even those which the Working Man calls necessary comforts. I cannot decide upon the size of the bill: I should want it big enough to stagger, but not too big, to unseat.

His health improved slightly. His mental instability, the feeling that he was going insane, disappeared altogether. He thought this was due to his separation from Alostrael. To the outward eye, he reasoned, he was quite normal in himself and in what he was doing; he might be any English tourist relaxing. In the Restaurant de Tunis, he saw his faithful lieutenant, Omnia Pro Veritate, who had come in search of him. But apart from giving him the sign of silence (thumb to lip, fingers closed), he passed him by, as if he did not know him. Shortly afterwards he decided to discontinue the Retirement. It had lasted a fortnight; this is why he called it a Lesser Magical Retirement.

Mudd's heart was filled with love for his Master and on a sheet of the Tunisia Palace Hotel notepaper, he wrote this letter to the editor of *Isis*, the Oxford University magazine. It was published in that magazine on 14 November 1923.

To whom it may concern.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

I am an MA of Cambridge University (Mathematical Scholar of Trinity College).

I have known Aleister Crowley for over thirteen years. He is admittedly one of the most remarkable poets and writers of the present day.

I have studied his scientific memoranda with great care, and I am satisfied that they would lead to discoveries which will furnish mankind with a new instrument of knowledge and a new method of research.

I have examined the accusations made against him by certain newspapers of a certain class, and find them without exception baseless falsehoods. I know that his ideals are noble, his honour stainless, and his life devoted wholly to the service of mankind. Having given his entire fortune to his work, he has been unable to refute publicly the calumnies of his assailants. He has found no men among those who know him, sufficiently prominent, powerful, and courageous to come forward and vindicate him before the world.

The honour of England is concerned that her greatest poet should not perish under the malice or neglect of his fellowcountrymen, as so often in history.

I shall come to London and devote myself to persuading some person or corporation of authority, wealth, or influence, to investigate the accusations against Mr Crowley...

Love is the law, love under will.

Norman Mudd

All the time Crowley was, of course, taking drugs. Now he openly admitted his failure to resist them. Gone was the pretence of curing himself by the strength of his will or of submitting to them for the sake of discovering the power of corruption. Without drugs he could no longer exist; he compared drug-taking to living on borrowed capital.

Since he could not sleep – insomnia is one of the symptoms of drug poisoning – it did not matter when he went to bed or when he got up. A great deal of his time, anyhow, was spent in bed, whether asleep or awake. And most of the rest of the time was spent loafing about. Slowly, some kind of routine came into the twenty-four hours. At about 2.00 pm, while still in bed, he took up the threads of the Hag and began dictating to Alostrael. He rose at 5.00 pm, washed, shaved, dressed, and went out with but little appetite to dinner at the Maison Dorée; then he came back to the Souffle du Zéphir to dictate, read, play chess, or chat about the Cabbala with Mudd and Eddie Saayman, one of Mudd's former pupils who had drifted into the thelemite camp while on vacation from Oxford. Occasionally, he sat in yoga posture and meditated 'in a rather half-hearted and informal way', or put

Mudd through the rigours of a Crowleian psychoanalysis.¹ During the night, he calmed his nerves with ether. If he was lucky, he fell into a light sleep by 4.00 am but more often 'I merely fade away about 7.'

At about 9.00 am, in a condition of half-sleep, he took his breakfast. Then he dozed brokenly till mid-day or 1.00 pm, by which time he more or less considered himself awake, so he pulled himself together with cocaine or heroin, 'the choice depending on some self-instinctive impulse'. He had given up the habit of counting the doses. He no longer cared about the quantity he took and relied, if at all, upon some unspecified magical means of averting collapse. 'My chief worry is the knowledge that sleep fails to refresh me as it should. I wake (too often) depressed, anxious, and with some premonitory systems of dissociation of thoughts.' The greatest mainstay was his work on the Hag, and he dreaded the time when it would be finished.

He again pondered the cost of drug-taking, the fears, real and imaginary, and wondered whether a man yields himself to drugs because of an unconscious wish to destroy himself. He concluded that he was in no danger until after May 1921 with its Event. He was referring to his attainment of the Grade of Ipsissimus, when he ceased to be Aleister Crowley and became god. '9.34 p.m. As God goes, I go.'

Is he telling us that one can only abandon one's human consciousness at one's peril?

Why is it that one takes cocaine (but no other drug) gluttonously, dose upon dose, neither feeling the need of it, nor hoping to get any good from it? I have found that every time. Three doses, intelligently taken, secure all one wants. Yet, if the stuff is to hand, it is almost impossible not to go on. One resists successfully (perhaps) for a few nights, then slides into a 'go as you please' race without rime or reason. One even goes on while actually cursing oneself for one's folly. (The one light spot is that so far sudden and complete suppression has been as easy as if cocaine were cabbage!) Folly! not only fear, but the horse sense of not wasting a cherished and possibly irreplacable stock. Why take thirty doses (or is it sixty? I haven't a ghost of a guess) to get into a state neither pleasant nor in any other way desirable, but fraught with uneasiness, remorse, self-

contempt, alarm, discomfort, and irritation at the ever-present thought of 'Hell! now I have to endure the reaction' while well aware that with three one can get all one wants without one single drawback?

Brother Omnia Pro Veritate was soon staying permanently in Marsa with the Beast and the Ape of Thoth. It was intolerably dull in the Abbey of Do What Thou Wilt without its Abbot. While the Beast was on his Magical Retirement, O.P.V. and the Ape were left to their own devices. They shared the same little hotel, if not the same room; for the first time they grew to know each other. Leah had aged rapidly and her face had become permanently haggard. The hair was disappearing from Mudd's forehead and he had grown fat.

Towards the end of September, Brother O.P.V. swore a solemn oath to the Lords of Initiation (Ra-Hoor-Khuit and Hoor-Paar-Kraat, the active and passive forms of Horus) in the presence of the Beast, the Ape, and Eddie Saayman who had taken the title of Adonai Iao, the Lord Iao. A strange thing had happened: O.P.V. had fallen in love with the Scarlet Woman of the Beast. Love is akin to madness, Plato reasoned; Crowley thought so too, and a mad lieutenant was not good enough.

I hereby acknowledge that most if not all men when in the condition known as 'being in love' become temporarily unable to use their moral judgement.

The Beast and Alostrael have told me that I, being by my own admission 'in love' with Alostrael, have become, and now am, unable to reason correctly, and to devote my energies to the Great Work.

This would not do, so Brother Everything for the Sake of Truth called upon the Lords of Initiation to help him extirpate once and for all 'the consciousness of the tendency to perceive the sensation' of being in love with Alostrael.

I call upon Them [the Secret Chiefs] by the Power of the Act of Truth done by me shortly after the Winter Solstice of the Eighteenth Year of the Aeon [1922], when I renounced my career and my material possessions without reservation that I might devote my energies wholly to the Great Work, that is, to the Establishment of the Law of Thelema as given by Aiwass through The Beast 666 (the man Aleister Crowley) in The Book of the Law (Liber AL sub figura XXXI) as in the MS. which I

^{1 &#}x27;Beast indicated that when the time came to psycho-analyse me, I should have a hell of a painful time' (the diary of Norman Mudd).

IN EXILE

369

have seen, and which I here declare to command my allegiance, in loyal cooperation with The Beast its Prophet.

Wherein if I fail, may the light of my body be darkened, and the virtue of manhood abide no more with me. Love is the law, love under will.

Norman Mudd

The prayer of O.P.V. and the Command of the Great Wild Beast went forth. Men and women are but weak creatures, needing the gods to sustain and guide them. After signing the oath, O.P.V. departed for the nearby village of Hammam Lif with the manuscript of the Beast's autobiography under his arm. This was to be a Magical Retirement for eight days during which he was to think over everything well and truly.

Alostrael wished me farewell. I said to her: 'Well, good-bye. Look after yourself and The Beast, won't you?'

She said, 'Love is the law,' and I replied, 'Love under will.' She then kissed and embraced me, saying three times, 'I love you.' I was wretchedly frozen, as usual, and very sad. I wanted to say, 'You're a damned good comrade, and that is all that matters.' But after a long silence I could only say, 'Love under will.' She said, 'You will come back to us, won't you, and work together again?' I wanted to say both 'Yes' and 'I don't know.' What I did say was, 'Well, anyhow, we will work.'

Mudd's eight days' meditation and study of *The Confessions* of his Thrice Blessed and Thrice Illuminated Master (during the course of which he shed tears freely) only led him to an unexpected and tiresome conclusion about the woman he loved. Part of the Scarlet Woman's oath was that she should be loud and adulterous. She could be loud, reasoned Mudd, but not being married, hardly adulterous. To remove this imperfection someone should marry her. But who? Not the Beast, of course, for she could not be adulterous with her own husband. Modestly Mudd suggested that he should be Alostrael's bridegroom. This technical difficulty put Crowley in a quandary. 'We do not want a vulgar adulteress,' he replied. He had, however, to admit that there was some truth in what O.P.V. was saying. What should be done? The gods must be consulted. A ceremony, in which heroin was consumed, was performed.

The gods were not favourably disposed to the marriage of Mudd and Leah. Their reply reached the ears of the supplicants

in one hoarse shout, 'Restriction!' Crowley commented, 'Adultery does not imply marriage, no more than whoredom implies commerce.'

Shortly afterwards, the Beast himself, tired of waiting for the Rich Man from the West to appear, entered upon a Magical Retirement, placing his fate wholly in the hands of the Secret Chiefs of the A:A:

He went by car to Nefta, taking Alostrael with him and his negro boy, Mohammed ben Brahim. At Nefta, they hired a camel and set off for the desert, walking by night and sleeping by day. On the first night after his departure from Nefta, the Beast dreamed that he was arrested by 'some English fool 'tec', whom he defied to extradite him. The charge? Fraud. He stood his trial at Buckingham Palace and awoke before the verdict was announced.

At midnight on 24 October 1923, Adoration was observed 'by some phallic crumbling mass' on the west side of a narrow inlet of the Chott; and on 26 October the Beast performed beneath the stars an act of sex-magic for 'Physical Energy in Perfect Freedom' with Mohammed ben Brahim; afterwards he smoked four pipes of hashish.

This Magical Retirement was intended to last at least a month but because of Alostrael's ill health, they returned to Nefta after three days.

He found that looking at the sunset after dinner from the balcony of the hotel at Nefta, while the fumes of ether were intoxicating his brain, was an ecstatic visual experience. 'God! You ought to see Aldebaran from here!' he wrote to Mudd. 'Scarlet, azure, emerald, violet – all by ether!'

On 1 November in the oasis of Nefta, after the Adoration of the Midnight Sun, he performed another act of sex-magic with Mohammed. Immediately afterwards, as Crowley rose from the bed and was attempting to find in the pitch darkness the sleeves of his scarlet abbai or gown, his attention was attracted by what he took to be the lighted end of a cigarette. He thought at first that it was Alostrael smoking. The light disappeared, then reappeared. Neither Alostrael nor Mohammed could see it. The light continued to grow larger and smaller, come and go, and move within a small area. He compared it to the crimson sunset at the approach of a thunderstorm he had witnessed at Kairouan or to fresh blood on a bull's shoulder in bright sunlight.

'If this is not there in the ordinary physical sense, I am, for the

371

first time in my life, subject to a genuine hallucination,' he said, and struck a match to point out where the light was, but the match burnt down and went out before he could find it. This time he compared it to the Milky Way. Now Alostrael said that she could see it. Soon it faded away altogether.

This phenomenon tantalized the Beast. Was it, he asked, an elemental created by the opus with Mohammed 'or a deliberate

token of the presence of one of the Secret Chiefs?"

The sojourn at Nefta came to a rather dismal end with Crowley's falling sick and being unable to perform the rites of sex-magic; but Mohammed carried on with Alostrael for an Assistant. Then, he too fell sick.

'15 November 1.00 am Mohammed ben Brahim is quite seriously ill: in particular, he has lost the hearing of one ear. He was warned not to touch my Magick Bell; he did so (of course)

and gets it in the neck accordingly.'

The Beast and the Scarlet Woman began quarrelling furiously. Alostrael, whose health had steadily declined through the rigours of the thelemic existence, and who had been more or less continuously ill for the last year, took to her bed. However, the Beast had by now recovered which was fortunate because Mohammed ben Brahim was still in a bad way. They returned dejected to Tunis.

At the end of 1923, feeling that the magical current was exhausted and that it was a sheer waste of time for him to remain in Tunis, Crowley left for Marseilles. He had secured a room in Paris by a deprecatory letter to Monsieur Bourcier, the proprietor of the Hôtel de Blois, 50 rue Vavin. Here he had often stayed before the war and referred to this address as his Paris head-quarters.

I have not forgotten I owe you 2000 francs or whatever it is. My novel [The Diary of a Drug Fiend] has been a tremendous success and I shall be able to pay you as soon as my royalties begin to come in. I meant to do so in the spring, but the tyrannical outrage which I suffered at the hands of Mussolini stripped me of every sou so that I have been in desperate need of money ever since. I am sure you will understand and sympathize. My troubles are principally due to my loyal and passionate love of France and the principles, political and ethical, of your great Republic.

Crowley apparently changed his sentiments about the fair land

of France for, upon hearing in 1938 that the French President and his wife, Monsieur and Madame Lebrun, had been invited to pay a state visit to England, he exclaimed 'Two maggots escaping from the rotting body of their vile country!'

Everyone now falls out of the picture except the Beast, the Ape

and their faithful shadow, Omnia Pro Veritate.

'Beast left Tunis by the Gouv. Gen. Grèvy at 5 pm on Saturday,' wrote Mudd in his diary, 'with just about enough cash to visit Frank Harris at Nice and then go on to Paris. Alostrael and I are left stranded here with not enough money to pay even one week's board and lodging.'

On 2 January 1924, Crowley had lunch in Nice with Frank Harris and his wife. The 69-year-old writer and adventurer was almost as hard up as Crowley in spite of the success of the first volume of his infamous *My Life and Loves*. However, Harris managed to borrow 500 francs for Crowley who had not even his fare to Paris. The Beast observed in his *Magical Record* that Harris was insane and he called his *Life and Loves* the autobiography of a flea. The one-time distinguished editor of the *Saturday Review* was looking for a job.

My dear Crowley, Love is the law, for yourself first and then for all who deserve it! [he wrote]... For the first time I seem to have lost my way in life: I grope in the dark and stumble and hurt myself. I'd like to be made correspondent for some English paper: I know France and the Riviera better than most. If you can think of any way to get me such a post I'd be infinitely obliged.

He told Crowley about the Paris *Evening Telegram* which was for sale; he had been assured by 'an independent business man' that it was producing a profit of 120,000 francs a year. What a splendid solution this paper would be for both of them!

1 Autobiography of a Flea is the title of a 19th-century English pornographic work.

25 THE PERSECUTION OF THE THELEMITES

A MAGICAL current, like human energy in general, when once exhausted, takes time before it recharges itself. Crowley, magically speaking, was spent, at least for a while. He lay in bed in the Hôtel de Blois, thought up a few quite impractical schemes, and analysed his feelings. After the shock of his expulsion from Italy, he had refused to believe that failure was possible for him. He was in the hands of the Secret Chiefs, and even his errors were part of their plan and ultimate success. Now, if anything, he was more convinced than ever that he was in their hands; he certainly was not in anyone else's hands, least of all in his own.

For the first time in his life he had reached a sense of hopelessness; he was simply aware of the futility and worthlessness of his existence. 'I seem to have no strength or energy left. I take no real interest in anything for more than a few minutes at a time,' he wrote. 'I have no real hope, that is the root of the matter. . . . I have but a few minutes a day when I feel fit.'

He called upon his Holy Guardian Angel to carry him away to the company of World Teachers, Magi, and Saints. He lay in bed, dressed in his magical robes and jewellery, clasping *The Book of the Law* to his breast, ready for the entrance of Aiwass. And in one memorable passage in his *Magical Record* he accepted the picture of himself which was drawn by those who despised him. 'Have I ever done anything of value, or am I a mere trifler, existing by a series of shifts of one kind or another? A wastrel, coward, man of straw? I can find no answer whatever, the obvious verdict being every time "Guilty".'

He longed for death to relieve him of the burden of his existence but the arrival of a friend who gave him a few hundred francs renewed his hopes and he called upon Aiwass to encourage him. 'Aiwass! Thee I invoke. Restore my strength, my health, my energy, my courage! Let my genius – which is Thou! – flow upon the world to Thine eternal praise and glory! Aiwass! Thee, thee I invoke!'

Meanwhile O.P.V. and Alostrael, having spent their last sou and raised their final credit, were literally starving in Tunis and being driven into fits of alternate melancholy and rage by receiving no answer to their frantic appeals to their leader. They had pawned everything pawnable, except the sacred writings of the Beast and his magick ring. Then Crowley sent a big promise by cable, to which Mudd was only able to reply by finding a post-card already stamped. He addressed the Beast as his Beloved Father, informed him that he had not eaten for thirty-six hours and he was completely indifferent about whether he would ever eat again. Alostrael, in desperation, had managed to leave for Cefalu and it was touch and go whether she could send O.P.V. a few francs before he expired fom starvation.

Crowley's next communication from Paris was in the form of a postcard, informing Mudd that he was 'in bed with a bitch'. Mudd, in the circumstances, failed to find this funny, and he began to have grave doubts about Crowley's integrity. Shivering with cold, he carried the magick ring to the pawnbroker's and raised 84 francs on it.

All day the Beast went about dazed from drugs which were his sole support. Since there was no energy or opportunity for starting new ventures, he brooded over the old ones. A magical explanation was offered for the failure at Cefalu: owing to the small number of members of the Abbey 'the percentage of poison was too large to be turned into food; so we had to vomit it.'

He had tried everything, and now, at the age of fifty, when he could only proclaim the Law of Thelema, he realized that what he really wanted was a job, some congenial work, a conclusion which a no less extravagant and rebellious poet, Arthur Rimbaud, had discovered at the age of nineteen.

I have died already often enough; died to calf-love, to stamp-collecting, card-playing, first-edition hoarding, society-fluttering, chess-excelling, tiger-hunting, salmon-fishing, golf-loafing, woman-bagging, rock-scrambling, ice-maze-threading, sight-seeing, power-grasping. I have tried the hashish-life, the opium-life, the alcohol-life, the ether-life, the heroin-life; none of them has interfered with any other of the lives . . .

But, firstly, he must cure himself of the drug habit. If only someone would look after him, transport him to Fontainebleau, supply him with adequate funds – then he could cure himself in forty-eight hours.

He fell asleep and dreamed that he was being beheaded. He pulled himself together with ether and while under the influence of this drug, examined himself critically. He pawned his magick jewels, magick bell, and magick sword, his fur coat and cigarette-case. He lay in bed and stared at his two followers, who had managed at last to rejoin him, and warned them that he was 'a quite helpless infant, who must be fed and tended, and on no account frightened and hurt'. It is unlikely that either Mudd or Leah believed him. He was a Magus; he had, really, unlimited resources.

The Beast's hopes were maintained by his belief in Frank Harris's ability to purchase the Paris *Evening Telegram* and in Harris's willingness to share the editorship with him. He was not so optimistic about his own struggle towards that end. Harris wrote to him:

My dear Crowley, I had a short note today from your Norman Mudd saying that you were still awaiting a reply from your German friend and asking me for information as to the Paris Evening Telegram. I am keeping things simmering as I told you, and have the money promised me from one source or another on or before the first of March. Get what you can on your side and we'll all stand together. If you can get say 300,000 francs and I get the similar sum we'll make the capital of the paper a couple of million francs, and then see how much we shall want to carry on year by year. In fine we ought to be able to double the money we put in, within the year . . . Ever yours, affectionately.

Harris, who had followed the Beast to Paris, had a pathetic faith in Crowley's ability to find 300,000 francs. Meanwhile, he wrote to Crowley, could he return the 500 francs he had lent him in Nice? Crowley replied with an exegesis on Crowleyanity which he proposed as an alternative programme to editing the Paris *Evening Telegram*.

My dear Frank Harris, Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Yours just in – and I had feared your silence implied that you were annoyed with me for not making good that 500 francs! My God! what a facer for you! And what a 'stout heart' you put to the 'st'e brae'! The shocks of the past few days – my hotel is throwing me out on the 31st and I haven't even anything left to pawn! – have helped my health a lot. I dragged myself across Paris today to find you, and got back (all in!) to get your letter half an hour later.

Yesterday I decided to go to England the moment cash comes from Mudd, to attack the *Sunday Express* with my naked hands.

Do forgive me if I put before you once again the deepest conviction of my soul.

Rotten as I am in a thousand ways, I have been chosen by the 'Gods' - 'Masters' - 'Secret Chiefs' - 'Guardians of Mankind' - what you will, the idea is the same - to bring to earth the Formula of the New Aeon, the basic Word in which Mankind will work for the next 2000 years or so - the Word 'Do what thou wilt' with all the implications given in *The Book of the Law* (dictated to me by an unseen personage in Cairo twenty years ago).

I have been faithless in many ways: I have tried in particular to combine my mission with living the regular life of an English Gentleman. And the Gods won't allow it. They have checkmated my plans with ever-increasing severity, until I have been bludgeoned, stabbed, and starved into doing their work wholeheartedly the way they want it done.

Similarly with you... You must take my Mission seriously, and lend all your energies – which will then be renewed, like the eagle's – to establishing the law of Thelema.

To put it very crudely, Industrialism-Capitalism is heading for the cataract. The only alternative yet is Bolshevism, which won't do either.

Now, the Law of Thelema offers a third Way. These last years I have been training various people to act as a Brain for the human race. I have a number of people of some importance interested already; and the idea of my lawsuit [against the *Sunday Express*] is to give me the opportunity of proclaiming this Law in such a way that it will attract all those who are ready to cut the painter, and come out from the raving herd, and assume Kingship to rule the disorganized and bewildered mob.

I assure you the world is ready for this move. Even the 'successful' are sick to the heart of the hollowness of everything. My lawsuit will supply the necessary publicity; my opening and closing speeches will be *prophetic* – the Forth-Speaking of the Word of the Lord. With you to make practical use of the situation, to organize and distribute . . . Do this, and we shall not have lived in vain!

Please don't think my troubles have turned my brain! I am

sending this through Frater O.P.V. (Mudd) asking him to add a less prophetic explanation.

Love is the law, love under will.

Yours ever, The Beast 666
(in the mask, grotesque and worn of
Aleister Crowley)

At this time a prediction of the Chinese Oracle came true with startling accuracy. 'A great change is coming,' the Yi King had said, and on the morning of 1 May, after dreaming that he, the Grand Master, had successfully convened the Witches' Sabbath on Walpurgis night, he and his Scarlet Woman were unceremoniously thrown out of their lodgings at 50 rue Vavin. In The Confessions, Crowley mentions the proprietor and his wife, Monsieur and Madame Bourcier, with much affection and gratitude (they had treated him 'like a son'), and points a moral in their lives and conduct for all Englishmen who cannot get on with the French. But the hotel had changed hands and the new proprietor insisted on treating Crowley like a lodger. Well, anyhow, he had been warned by the Yi King, and he interpreted his eviction as a New Birth.

Sixteen days later, after he had pronounced a curse on 50 rue Vavin and seen the hotel go smash, his old friend, George Cecil Jones, who had introduced him to the Golden Dawn, J. W. N. Sullivan, and an Argentine gentleman called Alexander Xul Zolar 'who had been seeking me as a Master for some time', unexpectedly turned up, more or less at the same time. While all four were sitting round a café table and taking turns at playing each other chess, Crowley bisected the base of an equilateral triangle with its apex towards the West, facing the moon, and posited: 'Are not these the Three Holy Kings who have seen my Star in the West and come to worship me after my birth on May 1st?'

They had certainly brought offerings in the form of cash, food, and advice. 'Jones offered nothing but instruction in the King's Gambit. I beat him easily three times running. He had previously offered dinner but refused to worship me (in those actual words).'

He did not know what was happening at Cefalu until Mudd told him that the Abbey would be sold up unless he could pay immediately the long-overdue rent. And a letter from Ninette brought the news that Leah's sister, Alma, had written to say that she was coming to collect her nephew, Hansi. Crowley hurriedly replied, 'Should Alma come to Cefalu she is not to be admitted to

the Abbey or allowed to talk to the children. Don't parley with her: throw her out quick!'

Frustrated and furious, Crowley turned upon Mudd who was ascribing their plight to the fact that the Beast had not fulfilled certain commands of *The Book of the Law*. 'You must get on with the writing of the Comment on *Liber Legis*,' said O.P.V. 'And sacrifice cattle little and big, as it is written.' He also urged the Beast to 'abstract' the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu before it was too late. If Fuller would not help, they must do it by themselves. O.P.V. quoted from *Liber Legis*: 'Get the stele of revealing itself; set it in thy secret temple . . . It shall not fade but miraculous colour shall come back to it day after day.'

Crowley dismissed all these entreaties as nothing more or less than 'ghoul-grim threats', and poured forth his hatred upon his disciple. Everything that Mudd did for him was really a disguised attack; the heroin and cocaine that the ex-professor of mathematics brought him, after descents into the Parisian underworld, were only part of a diabolical plan to kill him off quickly. Omnia Pro Veritate was less than a mollusc, for a mollusc has organic form at least. He was merely a liquid mass of loathsome, detestable putrescence; and if Alostrael still associated with him, that was because she loved putrefaction and fulfilled her role as Scarlet Woman. ('What a vast cup she must have to hold so much abomination as just that one lump of rotten meat!')

Mudd was still in love with Leah. The appeal in Tunis to the Lords of Initiation to exorcise his passion for the Scarlet Woman had failed. And he still wanted to marry her. He wrote to Crowley that to marry Alostrael was his magical destiny, to which Crowley replied that his proper magical gesture would be to get a first-rate job, save some money, then insure himself heavily, and commit suicide 'so that the prophecies may be fulfilled'.

But in spite of all this abuse and contempt, the page was not yet filled before Crowley added a charitable word for Mudd. 'The wheel comes full circle,' he wrote. 'One must love this putrefaction and so impose on it the beginning of form and so the beginning of Beauty.' And, of course, one must not take his criticism of Frater O.P.V. to indicate any lack of 'great affections and respect'.

Alostrael, too, came in for her round of blows. 'Talking of my love for putrefaction,' said Crowley, 'this is the root of my love for the lowest whores, negresses, Olga of the broken nose and so on up to the Tenth Impurity, the skeleton Leah!'

Crowley reminded Mudd of his promise to vindicate his

Master's good name. How could this best be done? The Yi King was consulted as usual. The Sunday Express was held responsible for the decline and fall of the Abbey, and as the Beast had been unable by fair means or magick to overcome this paper or its proprietor, Lord Beaverbrook, the best thing to do was to come to some sort of terms with them. Mudd should call at the offices of the Sunday Express and appeal to Beaverbrook's and the editor's good faith to repair the damage they had done. As a policy it was considered good magic, for legal attack 'would only make them defiant'. Having conquered the Sunday Express, the Beast could then go on to become a kind of national hero 'by intervening in Labour disputes and the like'.

After much delay and inward struggle, Mudd finally produced an apology entitled *Open Letter to Lord Beaverbrook* and took it along to Herbert Clarke's English printing works in rue St Honoré where it was turned into a fifteen-page pamphlet. It was sent to all the leading English papers, to well-known personalities who were concerned with social justice, such as Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, Emma Goldman, Miguel de Unamuno (then in exile in Paris); to members of the Order, to friends, sympathisers, and to Scotland Yard. There was a pile of 3,000 of them on Mudd's table and only the lack of 3,000 stamps prevented himfrom distributing the lot. Appropriate letters were enclosed.

Dear Arnold Bennett, I am sure you remember me as habitually wearing the largest ring that you had ever seen on any human hand. As the enclosed shows I have been blackjacked and am only just beginning to pick myself up. I am sure that you will help me to secure a full public investigation of this abominable business. All sorts of un-English methods are being used to stifle the discussion. They seem principally to rely on bringing me to actual starvation before I can get back at them. For the honour of English letters, strike!

Yours sincerely, Aleister Crowley

Frank Harris, who also received a copy of the pamphlet, replied encouragingly:

My dear Crowley, I need hardly assure you of my wish to help you, but I am nearly powerless. If Lord Beaverbrook had brought out such a libel on me, I'd rejoice and would find, I am sure, some powerful English solicitor who'd go halves with me and make his Lordship pay and pay heavily.

I don't know what you've done or what they'll say you've done; but there's a way of confining them rigorously to proving their allegation without your needing to go into the box. There should be £10,000 in such a libel action. Why don't you put Mudd on to find out exactly? If I were you, I'd study every view of the case dispassionately and then give Beaverbrook Hell! As it is I'm here correcting a second vol. of *My Life* that no one wants and trying to find an English publisher for my *Oscar Wilde* book which made me a small fortune in USA. But no English bidders alas! Yours ever, Frank Harris.

The Open Letter is a dull and pointless pamphlet. The villain of the piece is the editor of the Sunday Express; Lord Beaverbrook is supplicated as if he were some impartial Heavenly Power guarding the affairs of men, and the chief role is played by Aleister Crowley who is a kind of King Lear and Bunyan's Christian bound in one.

Mudd's case was that the attacks on Crowley in the Sunday Express were one mass of lies, and that the statements (a) that when short of money for his Abbey, he sent his women on to the streets of Palermo, and (b) that he had once served a prison sentence in America for 'procuring young girls' were especially untrue. In point of fact, both of these accusations are untrue:

During May 1924, Crowley and Leah went to Chelles-sur-Marne, stayed at an inn with the same name as the inn at Fontainebleau, Au Cadran Bleu. Mudd carried the fight to England where, penniless and miserable, he distributed the *Open Letter*. He had for company an elderly gentleman from South Africa, Adam Gray Murray or Brother Virtute et Labore, a temporary civil servant who had lost his job at the end of the war. All I know about this Brother of the Order is that he had a long white beard, gave what little strength he had to the new religion, and died quietly from starvation in a public institution – but not before he had visited the Sacred Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu. Crowley was always able to get a meal¹ and he could always find someone to

1 The anarchist Emma Goldman wrote to Norman Mudd, 'Dear Sir, I fear you have failed to understand what I told you when you were here. I repeat I am too poor to be a help to anybody just now. Neither can I lend my name as support to any undertaking until I myself am on my feet. . . . I cannot believe that you are so hard pressed after seeing Mr Crowley last night at one of the cafés [in Paris] with a lot of his friends . . . '

put him up; his followers were not so lucky. In Mudd's magical diary for 19 November 1924, this ticket is pasted:

No. 10513

METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD HOMELESS POOR

Please admit:

NORMAN MUDD

He gave his age as thirty-five, his occupation that of a Literary Agent; the colour of his hair, brown; eyes, blue; height, 5 feet 4 inches; his place of birth, Manchester.

The Beast wandered along a bank of the Marne, scene of one of the decisive battles of World War I, and asked the Yt King for a sign. This was not another Magical Retirement, although Alostrael called it so, but simply a marking time. Three months went by and nothing disturbed his calm but a mild rumpus with the proprietor of the Cadran Bleu over a negress whom he had entertained in his room. His diary fell to pieces after beginning well with a poem which was also a prayer:

Here, by those banks where once the fullest flood
That hate could fill was met, and stemmed, and rolled
Back, in a mist of agony and blood
The lazy waters swirl, dull green and gold
Seeking eternally the eternal sea.
O waters that no might of man may stay
Bear on your easy breast my thoughts; set free
My equal spirit to its ordered way!
O waters, heal this wide, this unavailing
Wound, that no skill of medicine may redress
My soul, a steady ship, go idly sailing
In fancy down your leafy loveliness!
So may I turn anon with lance and sword
To lead once more the legions of the Lord!

He felt he had nothing more to say or do; he had said and done everything. All that remained now was to have the Mark of the Beast tattooed on his forehead, on his breast, and in the palm of his right hand. He should also have his name changed by deed poll to 'The Beast 666' but these measures on further consideration he rejected as 'theatrical'.

The Storm Fiend, his personification of an asthmatic attack,

was still sending him to his drugs. In a moment of insight, he called asthma a *maladie imaginaire*; and in a letter to Mudd, he made the surprising statement that heroin, instead of allaying its painful symptoms, actually produces them. 'It seems that feeding on heroin gives strength, but it starts asthma, bronchitis and company until I have accumulated a surplus sufficient to calm the condition from above, just as physical prostration kills it from below.'

Alexander Xul Zolar, who was nibbling at the new religion, paid him and Leah a visit at Chelles. The Beast made good company and the spectacle of the Scarlet Woman seeing visions in the moonlight was of considerable occult education.

The magical current could not have been weaker when suddenly there appeared unto the Beast another seeker after truth, an American lady of thirty-two whose spirit was urging her along the Wizard Way. This was Dorothy Olsen, on a post-war trip to Europe. In the summer of 1924, she made the pilgrimage to Chelles-sur-Marne and soon became one of the merry family of Thelemites, calling Crowley 'Beast', his Scarlet Woman 'Leah', and Mudd 'Mudd'. Her handwriting is large and wavering, without that stubborn quality of Alostrael's sharp penmanship. Miss Olsen was certainly seeking a Master but with feebleness like someone old and near death.

The Beast was immediately roused from his languor and on one September day, after Dorothy had entered the magick circle, taken the oath of Probationer of the A.A. and been handed the magical name of Astrid, he promptly unseated Alostrael – the 'woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast' – and fled with this new rider astride his flanks. There was a crackling and a crash of burning bridges. As a gesture to the gods, whose prophet he was, he again took his Great Beast ring of gold and rubies into the pawnshop. He ironically commented that, apart from Sister Astrid's dollars, all that was left was his collar, cigarette-case, portfolio, and tobacco pouch, and he added, with the efficiency of a sale-room clerk, 'possibly a few other odds and ends'.

He was in high spirits. Sister Astrid had changed the death magnetism, which had been slowly strangling him, to a new life. Even the sky at Chelles had been transformed at her approach, 'notably blue violet', the like of which he had never witnessed in France before, and rarely in the more exotic parts of the world. He asked the Secret Chiefs for their instructions and with one voice they urged him to advance as their Warrior Lord.

The Beast and Dorothy Olsen were whirled away to Paris and to Chantilly, like Faust to the Brocken, and Alostrael was left to wring her long thin hands, starve, and call upon Ra-Hoor-Khuit for help. But what could she have expected? Even men who have not taken the Oath of Magus¹ commonly fall in love with other women and desert wife and mistress. When, some days later, they came back to Paris, Crowley called on Leah who had also returned there – 'invaded' is the word he used to describe his visit – to tell her that the Secret Chiefs had ordered him to spend the winter on the North African coast with Sister Astrid and that they were to go alone – 'no impedimenta!' He did not know when he would see her again.

Leah's diary is not available for the period of these events, so I do not know what she thought of this design of the gods. Crowley however, briefly entered into his *Magical Record*, 'Leah collapsed.'

Alostrael, left alone in Paris (Mudd was in London), without money, in poor health, and in the grip of the drug fiend, passed into the abyss; not the Abyss that leads from this sorrowful earth to the Abode of the Secret Chiefs, but the abyss of human misery and mental anguish. She was no longer the Scarlet Woman whose appearance, robed and trance-like, in the temple at the Abbey, had startled Betty May, and whose solemn oaths were inscribed in the Abbey's *Record*:

I dedicate myself wholly without stint to the Great Work.

I will raise myself in pride.

I will follow Ra-Hoor-Khuit in His way:

I will work the work of wickedness:

I will kill my heart:

I will be loud and adulterous:

I will be covered with jewels and rich garments:

I will be shameless before all men:

I, for token thereof, will freely prostitute my body to the lusts of each and every Living Creature that shall desire it.

I claim the title Mystery of Mysteries, BABALON the Great and the Number 156, and the Robe of the Woman of Whoredoms and the Cup of Abominations:

Witness mine Hand, Alostrael

Holes were being drilled into her chest and her eyes, judging

1 Inter alia, to prostitute his body to the lusts of all and sundry.

from a passport photograph pasted into her diary during September 1924, shone with the brightness of the consumptive and the far-away gaze of a woman distraught. Her notebooks, 'The Magical Diary of Babalon', tell the story of the Bride of Chaos, as she called herself. She was forty-one years of age.

A cable arrived from Ninette. Alma had carried out her threat; she had descended upon the Abbey and taken away Hansi. Leah seems to have been more annoyed with the American Consul at Palermo for failing to stop her than upset at the loss of her child. She vented her impotent rage in an abusive letter to him, concluding with 'Yours in full sanity, Leah Hirsig.'

Hansi was taken to America. 'It was like taming a little wild beast to bring him to the normal life that is the right of all children,' wrote his aunt, Alma. Thus poor Dionysus was dragged away from the new splendid world of 'Do what thou wilt', back to the old, bad world of 'You'll do what you're told.'

In the company of a friend, Leah dragged herself about raindrenched Paris after an unsuccessful visit to the American Consulate (the officials there could not or would not do anything about Hansi) and fell down in the street outside her lodgings. Not having paid the rent, her belongings had been removed from her room but the landlady brought out a chair for her to sit on in the hall.

Could she have her room back? Landlady disappeared to ask landlord. The answer was No.

Leah staggered up but immediately collapsed. A fragment of her diary gives us a glimpse of the dismal scene.

'By this time the woman prop (I call her that for short) had regained her old and natural attitude. I lay on the floor shivering. Not a soul stirred anything but their tongues. They jeered at me – sick indeed! No, doped! They said I must go out. I tried to go and fell again. More jeers – a crowd and then the police.'

Was this not the punishment foreshadowed in *The Book of the Law*?

'Let the Scarlet Woman beware! If pity and compassion and tenderness visit her heart; if she leave my work to toy with old sweetnesses; then shall my vengeance be known... I will cast her out from men; as a shrinking and despised harlot shall she crawl through dusk-wet streets, and die cold and an-hungered' (*Liber Legis*, ch. II, v. 43).

She passed through the abyss or the dark night of the soul and found at the end of it that she had still a will to live. She looked around desperately; she must get well, that was her first task.

Strangely, the only reality that swam before her, the spar to which she clung in this sea of misery, was the religion of the Crowned and Conquering Child, of Horus.

'Praise unto Ra-Hoor-Khuit!

'Babalon is risen and the children of the new Aeon live and will thrive!'

She must live. The Great Work had still to be performed – the establishment for all mankind of the law Do What Thou Wilt – and it was her destiny to perform it. Meanwhile she was tormented by the silence of the Beast – upon discovering his address, she had cabled him for some money or for one word of hope.

Out of Leah's confused and conflicting emotions two lines of thought about Aleister Crowley - the one human, the other magical – can be discerned. On the human plane she still loved him. and could not bear to give him up. If she could not live with him. then let her die with him. 'I should have liked as a human creature to have died in the arms of The Beast 666 who, as will be noted in my very first diary (commencing 21 March 1919) was, and is, my lover, my mate, my Father, my child, and everything else that Woman needs in Man.' And on the magical plane, in the realm of Thelema, she reluctantly recognised that a new Scarlet Woman had arisen and taken over her role. The Great Beast was a person. the Scarlet Woman an office. The fact that Crowley, on 22 July 1920, had taken a vow of Holy Obedience to the Scarlet Woman. that is to say, to her, she had either forgotten or wisely ignored. Obediently, Leah bowed her head and stepped aside to let Sister Astrid pass. 'A word to Dorothy. She is the Scarlet Woman and she will show her failure or her success quite differently from previous Scarlet Women for she is the mother of a race of a new dynasty,' But in the Café du Dôme, where Leah and Crowley were well known, it was simply said that Crowley had deserted her and gone off with another woman.

As the days grew shorter, Leah went from bad to worse. She seriously considered suicide and prepared her last, magical, testament. One night she awoke, thinking she had heard a voice crying out her name: 'Leah! Leah! Leah!' Thrice, distinctly, her name had been despairingly called. She was drifting away, out into a sea of death. 'Leah! Leah! Leah!

O.P.V. returned to France from an unsuccessful campaign with his *Open Letter* in England. He was quite down and out, had been struggling along by defrauding landladies, by begging from his few friends, and extracting the last pound from his poor and bewildered parents.

Your letter and enclosure [the Open Letter] reached us last evening [wrote his father] and both mother and I are deeply concerned and very despondent about the whole affair. We hope you are quite sure of your facts, for the events referred to seem to relate to the period of your absence from this country when you were thousands of miles away from your hero and therefore not fully cognizant of his doings. If you are relying mainly on his word, I am afraid you are trusting on a very broken reed. You know we never liked him and have not the slightest sympathy with his cause. We have always looked on him as your evil genius right from your Cambridge days, and are terribly afraid that he will blight your whole life. As to our future, it cannot, under the most favourable circumstances, be very extensive and therefore the limit cannot be 'too distant'. We hate to plead poverty and therefore refrain from harrowing your feelings, but I do not think you should ask us to assist in the slightest degree a hero and a cause which we have not the slightest sympathy with. Moreover, we feel that time, money and effort are all thrown away in bolstering up or trying to whitewash this discreditable affair. Mother is deeply grieved and cannot see a solitary glimmer in this darkness - she sends the enclosed for your very own sake . . .

Mudd's clothes were literally falling from him; he looked such an abject and dreadful wreck that it had been a subject of speculation among the Brethren whether or not his appearance at the office of the Sunday Express would wring the heart of James Douglas and enable the Thelemites to win a kind of moral victory over their enemies. Now he tramped the streets of Paris with the ex-Scarlet Woman, the former Whore of the Stars between whose breasts Crowley had scratched or painted the Mark of the Beast. talking to her about the relationship of modern scientific theory to the greatest work of the age, The Book of the Law. He was 'almost constantly unhappy at the thought that The Beast might be fundamentally unfaithful to The Book of the Law'. They discussed plans for the re-establishment of the Abbey. They were both still members of the Order and they had, at last, received instructions from the Beast to get on with the job - Mudd to vindicate Crowley's good name and Alostrael to type out The

1 The diary of Norman Mudd.

Confessions – while he was on his Great Magical Retirement with Sister Astrid. Although in their despair nothing seemed worth doing, and the work of establishing the Law unreal – the phrase is Mudd's – the Law of Thelema was still their sole purpose of living.

There are notes of joy in Leah's diary when a friend gave her a few francs or when Nina Hamnett sent her 10 shillings. Professor Norman Mudd also has his triumphs – he sold four empty medicine bottles for 65 centimes and bought himself some cigarettes.

Alostrael's mind began to take on that attitude which regards everything as symbolic. Words were realities. Every event had its magical meaning, every simple occurrence was interpreted as a message from the gods, the influence of the planets, the activities of malign or benign forces. She, too, consulted daily the Yi King, and worked out the Cabbalistic meaning of names. Visions and dreams were recorded and scrutinized. Contradictions were easily resolved and where there were none they mysteriously appeared. In her cold Paris room she sat in yoga posture and offered up her magical prayers.

O Thou God of War and Vengeance, Hear me, Alostrael, who invokes Thee to help us to do Thy Work.

Be Thou our strength, our force, and vigour of our arms, as Nuit is our refuge, and Hadit our Light, that we may go on, go on in Thy strength, and fight as brothers.

Hear me, Thou Lord of the Double Wand of Power.² Unto Thee I eat of this cake of light, that it may breed lust and power of lust in me.

Hear Thou me, O Lord of Silence and Strength.³ Show me Thy Way that I may follow Thee in it.

Give Thou of Thy wisdom to Our Lord the Beast 666, whom Nuit has called Her scribe Ank-f-n-Khonsu, the priest of the princes; whom Hadit hails as the prophet of Nu, the Prophet of Had, the prophet of Ra-Hoor-Khu; and whom Thou has termed O blessed Beast, that he may comment on this Three-fold Book of Law, with Hadit burning in his heart...

A plan came into her mind. Crowley was the Sun, but she was the Great Mother. Mudd was the son of the Sun, born of Crowley. She would perform a magical ceremony with O.P.V. At first Leah was not sure what sort of ceremony it should be. It had begun by her telling him about the colours of the thelemic banner: red, white, and brown. 'By uniting Red and White, and Black and White, we would preserve the original Red and White and destroy the Black forever by merging it with these two and forming a third colour.'

Suddenly she realized the nature of the ceremony she wanted to perform – a Magical Marriage. She would marry Brother O.P.V. in spite of the Lords of Initiation and the Beast who had expressly forbidden it.

Firstly, there was to be a Magical Wedding Feast. She took Mudd into a restaurant and ordered tea, bread, ham, and figs which represented respectively the colour of gold, white, red, and black. The waiter came back to say that they had no figs. Figs were absolutely essential so Leah sent Mudd out into the street to find some. He returned with black grapes instead, and was promptly sent off again. He came back with only four figs after 'a very, very long time'. By now the tea was cold, but no matter.

Mudd had not the slightest idea what was being prepared.

'I then proceeded to tell him that this was a marriage feast now that the Prince had found the slipper of Cinderella and could carry her off to his castle. And that Parsifal, having found his lance, would now be able to use it.'

Mudd was probably filled with joy, for his wish to marry Alostrael, the only woman he had ever loved, had remained with him all the time. Before meeting Alostrael, 'I had always regarded marriage with any woman soever as absurd and out of the question for me,' he wrote at the time the idea of marrying her had first occurred to him.

Each took a grape, a sip of cold tea, a tiny piece of ham, and a morsel of white bread. As for the figs, which had held up the proceedings, they were left untouched because they had suddenly reminded Leah of the story of Adam and Eve, and anything from the Bible was to her equivalent to blasphemy.

Mudd was now Parsifal and Leah instructed him in the use of his lance. She saw herself being reborn; the myths and fairy tales provided the clue to their new life. All her creative force would be used to teach Parsifal, her son, how to use his lance and win the good fight.

But, firstly, a letter to Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, the Priest of Thebes, Crowley's incarnation during the 26th Egyptian dynasty. And Parsifal was ordered out of the restaurant again to send the letter straightway. I do not know the nature of the message.

¹ Ra-Hoor-Khuit. 2 Hor-Makhu, Lord of the Double Horizon.

³ Hoor-Paar-Kraat. 4 Another form of Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

⁵ The Book of the Law has three chapters.

Parsifal took a long time to raise a magical current to contact Ankh-f-n-Khonsu. Leah described it as an eternity before he returned. Then more talk on magic and mythology, during which Alostrael used her powers as Great Mother to fascinate and inspire Parsifal. Finally, they went off to her room to consummate their marriage 'in which we did reverence unto Ra-Hoor-Khuit'.

Mudd was amazed at Leah's revelation about himself and Parsifal, and for a brief time he was comforted and happy. 'Babalon gave me the "force of Babalon" – which I enjoyed for some hours thereafter in the form of unusual mental calm and serenity and a general exaltation of energies.' They were with each other daily during the weeks that followed, searching for ways and means to teach their new religion, carrying out all the Beasts' fiats from Tunis, and performing regularly those acts of sex-magic which had been part of the routine of the Abbey.

'Opus I. For the establishment of the new civilisation. With a man who does not know who he is, but is commonly called Norman Mudd.'

26 THE REBIRTH OF ALOSTRAEL

While Leah and Norman Mudd starved and moped about the Paris streets, Crowley and Dorothy Olsen were proclaiming the Law and worshipping Horus in the sunshine of North Africa, an ideal place for a winter holiday. The stimulus of a new woman always had a miraculous effect on Crowley's health. He was delighted with Dorothy. In his *Book of Oaths* he wrote of her:

I have got the girl I wanted, (In my heart and dagger thrusts); Her wicked little bat's eyes slanted, Gleaming with unfathomable lusts, Glittering slits through which the soul Burns in hell like a live coal.

They had sailed from Marseilles to Tunis and while in the Mediterranean the Beast had grown so elated that he had drafted out a manifesto *To Man*. 'Given in the midst of the Mediterranean Sea.' The manifesto was aimed at the Theosophists, who were about to announce the emergence of the World Teacher, the 'coming Buddha' called *Maitreya* or 'the Loving One', in the consciousness of Jiddu Krishnamurti, who had been trained for this role since he was adopted as a baby by Annie Besant and Charles Webster Leadbeater.

At Tunis, Crowley found a jeweller who converted his Great Beast ring (retrieved at the last moment from the pawnshop before departing from Paris) into a jewel for the forehead of his new Scarlet Woman. From Tunis, which lies inland, they went to Carthage on the coast, then to the next town, Sidi bou Said, where the manifesto *To Man* was printed and issued.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law

My term of Office upon the Earth being come in the year of the foundation of the Theosophical Society I took upon myself, in my turn, the sin of the whole World, that the Prophecies might

be fulfilled, so that Mankind may take the Next Step from the Magical Formula of Osiris to that of Horus.¹

And mine Hour being now upon me, I proclaim my Law.

And the word of the Law is thelema.

[&c.]

Whoso understandeth may seek through

D. Olsen

Sidi bou Said (Tunisia)

It was not signed by Crowley; in such cases he liked to remain hidden in the background.

He was greatly impressed by the fact that he had been born in the year the Theosophical Society was founded, 1875. The only Great Spiritual Leader available, whatever the Theosophists might think or be doing, was Himself. He, and He alone, was the World Teacher. Hence this feeble attempt to jostle Krishnamurti from the Throne of *Maitreya* and sit on it himself.

The magic of the Beast was now taking effect on Dorothy. Back in their hotel room, as they were undressing to go to bed, she suddenly felt 'a presence – calm, strong and gentle', but she could not identify it. Was it Aiwass come to bless Crowley's union with another Scarlet Woman or some other Secret Chief? Dorothy immediately put on her magic headpiece and Crowley nervously struck his magic bell, but the 'presence' did not manifest itself.

The next day they went by train along the east coast of Tunisia to Sfax, the Yi King having pronounced for the journey, 'There rest, under the canopy of night.' From Sfax, they went inland to Tozeur and Nefta; then, abandoning train and car, they hoisted themselves on to camels and set off through the desert. They were now in the Sahara, crossing the Great Eastern Desert. Fifty years before two French explorers had been murdered by savage tribes in this part of the world; but nothing untoward happened to Crowley and Dorothy Olsen, apart from a 'magical attack of flies', as they rode among the great dunes.

They ran into an Arab, Abd el Aziz ben Mohammed, who asked them to lunch at his house 6 kilometres south of El Oued. He was a mighty Marabout chieftain, was this Arab, and the walls of his house were hung with rich carpets. In Crowley, he had recognised a Secret Master. Accordingly the Beast and his Scarlet

Woman were entertained lavishly. Eighteen dishes – hors d'oeuvre – leading up to a whole roasted sheep which was brought in on a vast copper tray. 'We tore off the crackling with great joy,' wrote Crowley. Afterwards Abd el Aziz ben Mohammed escorted his guests into El Oued.

Bidding good-bye, the Beast saluted and thanked him in the name of the Order which he had the honour to command – it had been a most pleasant climax to their eight-day journey across the desert.

They pushed on to Touggourt, which is on the other side of this stretch of the Great Eastern Desert, and took the train north to Biskra – 'as rotten as I thought it was'. The view of the heavens, however, was as good at Biskra as anywhere in that part of the world. In a letter to Brother Virtute et Labore, the venerable Adam Gray Murray, who had been quarrelling with Mudd and had actually kicked his backside, Crowley said, 'Leah wires that you are ill with an inflated Ego. I hope not; it's the one thing that could send you off the rails. Ah! could you but see the Stars as one sees them from here and realize the Vastness of Things, there would be no danger. Your work is only important as is that of any other grain of dust: one error and the whole machine goes out of gear.'

The Magical Pilgrimage was coming to an end; it had lasted almost three months. Lack of funds and the fact that Dorothy was ill were making things rather dull. The exhilaration of a new Scarlet Woman and a change of surroundings had relieved Crowley to some extent of his dependence on drugs, but before the Pilgrimage was over, he was again being reckless with cocaine and hashish.

It was while Crowley and Dorothy were in North Africa together that a series of events which can be described only as the fulfilment of the scriptures began to happen; for it led to the appearance of the Rich Man from the West, Karl Johannes Germer (Frater Saturnus), whom *The Book of the Law* had predicted.

'There cometh a rich man from the West who shall pour his gold upon thee.'

The first significant event was that Heinrich Traenker, of Weida in Thuringia, Germany, who was known in occult circles as Frater Recnartus, had a great illumination in which he saw Aleister Crowley as the leader of a group of Masters.

Traenker was the head of Pansophia, an occult organisation

¹ The formula of the 'dying god', typified by Osiris, Christ, Adonis, Vitobha, as compared with that of the Crowned and Conquering Child, Horus, 'the evercoming one', son of Osiris,

with a small publishing firm of the same name. In 1924, he was made the head of the O.T.O. for Germany or, rather, out of the confusion in the affairs of the O.T.O. during the last months of Reuss's earthly existence, Traenker found himself being gently edged towards the German headship of the Order. The name and fame, therefore, of Brother Baphomet were not unfamiliar to him.

Now, Reuss (Brother Merlin) had been not only Grand Master of the O.T.O. for Germany but the International Head of the Order as well, which International Headship was now vacant; and Brother Recnartus's illumination, in which he saw Aleister Crowley as the leader of a group of Masters, meant only one thing – it foretold the ascent of Baphomet to the supreme position in the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Order. To quote from the relevant documents: 'From then onwards Traenker, who had an extraordinary gift for illumination, acknowledged Crowley implicitly.' He got in touch with the Beast who had meanwhile returned to Paris and invited him to a conference in Germany during the summer of 1925, leaving it to Brother Saturnus to pay his fare.

A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and among his own kin. In Britain, Crowley had been denounced as a cannibal but in Germany, home of mystics, where the O.T.O. had been founded, the Great Wild Beast 666, with his pagan gods and law of doing one's will, found his greatest response. The law of Thelema seems to have been especially appreciated by the Germans.

In the spring of 1925, Crowley again set off with Dorothy for North Africa. One night in Tunis he went into a trance. It was so intense that he almost fainted. Brother Bar-On (William George Barron) who was present bore witness to the numerous magical manifestations which occurred at the time. When the Beast emerged from this trance, he wrote down the startling vision he had seen. It was published in 1938, 1 entitled *The Heart of the Master* by Khaled Khan (Crowley). It is a short, apocalyptic work.

I waken from the horror. Every nerve is numb, every muscle frozen, every bone one ache, my blood throbbing with poison. But the shambles is now dimly to be seen.

What? Can the Voice have spoken Truth after all? Is then the Star a Sun, whose light is at last piercing the foul mists of massacre, whose heat is forcing the congealed miasma to stream skyward in those murky banks of dim grey cloud?

Hark! Yes, the few that are still alive have seen what rouses them to lift their crippled arms, to stare with blear bloodshot eyes, to jabber with broken jawbones and torn tongues.

'For Christ's sake,' screams an emasculated rag of flesh, 'don't look at that damned Star!'

'We're lost,' another squeals.

'The Beast!' yells a third maniac.

A letter of Dorothy's which, on Crowley's advice, she wrote to a friend in America, throws light upon her aspirations, temperament, and the general financial situation.

I am hoping to be married very shortly and I look naturally to my future husband for assistance. Unfortunately he can do nothing until he has succeeded in putting over certain important business deals, and we are very sorely hampered in this matter for lack of ready money, we need \$1,000 to carry us over, and if you would lend us this sum you would be doing us a great favour, we would certainly repay you by the end of the summer, I understand he [Crowley] wrote to a friend of yours, asking him to come over in the hope of interesting him. There are main projects which I can personally assure you are sound and straightforward.

I have known this gentleman intimately for over 9 months, and I can assure you that you are making the greatest possible mistake in treating him with distrust and suspicion.

I had a letter today from a friend which makes it clear that certain people whom I know to be unscrupulous have been poisoning the minds of my friends in New York against both him and me. You have known me for quite a number of years and you ought to know that I have always behaved with absolute decency and generosity and that I would not mix myself up with anything doubtful.

The distress we are now in is absolutely not our fault, it is due precisely to this scandalmongering...

These views and explanations were as much Crowley's as Dorothy's for the Beast actually wrote the letter and Sister Astrid merely retouched it. They had run out of money, and there are quite a few entries in Crowley's Magical Record 'to get money for Astrid' as the object of their sex-magic.

The Beast's thoughts took a backward turn and a melancholy

hue; but he dismissed them with the idea that he was dead already and it was, therefore, absurd to regret anything.

Meanwhile, Leah, who had incomparably greater faith in thelema than Dorothy, was being forced to sell herself on the Paris streets to keep alive. And invoking Ra-Hoor-Khuit at the same time, for with her, sex, even in her new role as prostitute, had always to be combined with magick. Like Mudd, she now no longer knew who she was, and commenced a new diary with 'Diary of? – known on Earth as Leah Hirsig'. But in a moment of hope and revolt, she wrote on a postcard this one sentence from The Book of the Law, 'And in his woman called the Scarlet Woman is all power given,' and sent it to the Beast. Yes, all power had been given to her, and from the All Powerful nothing can be taken away; she still rode upon the Beast. Babalon had arisen!

But when this exultation had passed, she saw she must break away entirely from Crowley and find her own life; she could not do so at once; she was too identified with his demoniac spirit for that; she could only slowly and painfully wean herself from him. She began by informing Crowley that she could best help him by relieving him of the worry of any material support of her. But by this she was only attributing her own anxieties and decency to him, for there is nothing to suggest that Crowley was worried for one moment about leaving her to starve. For the first time in six years, she separated her possessions from his, and wrote to ask him what he would like her to do with his books and papers which she still had.

In January 1925, she found a job in a 'dirty little restaurant in Montparnasse'. For thirteen hours a day she washed up, peeled potatoes, and carried coal, and all the time was afraid – terrified would not be too strong a word – that the proprietor might find out who she was – the Scarlet Woman of the Beast 666 – and give her the sack.

Suddenly, one spring morning of that year, Alostrael bought a third-class ticket to Marseilles and set off, ill and drab, for Tunis. She had received a summons from the Beast: Sister Astrid was expecting a baby and she must come to help. Poor Ninette, marooned at the Abbey and enduring an existence of misery and poverty, was in the same condition. A Sicilian peasant boy, who had been initiated into the thelemic Mysteries, was the father of 'Master Bastard the III', as Ninette called her fourth child. She wrote of the situation in thelemic terms: 'I have had a tremendous resentment at my own self at allowing myself to become pregnant

against my wishes and I still have; but I will accept him as doing his free will in choosing me for a mother, and he will get the best I have to give.'

Dorothy was neither in good health nor in good spirits and the presence of Leah upset her further. Only the strongest natures can stand up to the pressure of magick. On Friday, 24 April, at 11.11 pm, a much-ruffled Magus, lying in bed in his Tunis hotel, wrote in his Magical Record:

A single drink of rum (on top of a good deal of mental worry during the day) was enough to induce in Dorothy Olsen an attack of acute mania. Lying in bed, close cuddled, I nearly asleep, she suddenly started to scratch my face without the least warning, with a spate of the filthiest incoherent abuse of me and everybody connected with me. There had been a good deal of irritation and snappiness during the afternoon and evening, with one or two beginnings of the regular ravings; but no one took any notice, and they subsided.

Leah had arrived in Tunis at the end of March 1925. At the beginning of May, Crowley and Dorothy left for France. Dorothy had miscarried so they did not, after all, require Alostrael. Leah did not seem to mind being left in Tunis; by now she had developed some degree of detachment from the Beast. Something of the new Leah that had been germinating beneath the surface had at last broken through. 'This is the first time,' she wrote, 'that I have been left alone, either with or without work, with or without money, that I do not feel at my wits' end.' She was not without friends. There was Gérard Aumont who translated the The Diary of a Drug Fiend into French, and William George Barron, a new aspirant to the Great Work whom she had met already in Paris. They took her to the pictures and gave her the loose change, and Barron was her partner in the sex-magic rites. The hysterical, suicide themes subside. There were, of course, occasional lapses, marked by fits of weeping but on the whole Leah moved steadily out to find her own life. She dreamed that she and the Beast were together in bed, but she rose up and left him and 'I went to my own little hut.' Her attitude towards Crowley became critical. 'Dear A.C.,' she wrote, not as formerly, 'My Beloved Beast' or 'My Big Lion'.

Dear A.C., I do not know whether it's sick or dying or what - I have every reason to think, however, that it's the Formula of

the Happy Man that makes you act the cad. You have not so much as acknowledged the various MSS. I have sent, nor, bar the one letter of May 15, have I had any news of you. Most especially, the money promised in the letter has not yet arrived . . . I do not for a moment believe that the Gods are responsible for the continuation of this silly financial mess. It is all very well to howl 'Material prosperity' and spend like an ass, but it doesn't bring anything but debts – and stupid ones at that. So just get a move on. Leah.

She recognised at last that her love for Crowley was an illness of mind, and that she must get cured of it. 'A.C.-itis' she called it. For her, Crowley now stood only for a magical word, the logos of the new religion, *thelema*.

'I do in the main consider him merely a Word,' she wrote rather ironically in her diary, 'but it's damn hard when one has to have "human" dealings with what appears to be the rottenest kind of creature, to think of it as an Idea.'

She left the man Aleister Crowley to Dorothy, who was trying to tidy up his affairs, and who had actually written to her former rival, Leah, 'Beast must get rid of old mistresses and other drags.' Judging from a stray reference, in one of Dorothy Olsen's letters, to a black eye which the Beast had inflicted on her, she was succeeding none too well.

Mudd had also been forced to the conclusion that the real Aleister Crowley was rather different from his idealized portrait of him. 'A.C. is a coward and a shirker,' he wrote. 'Puts his dirty work on to others.' But such is human weakness that Mudd, nevertheless, continued his endeavours to vindicate Crowley's good name.

Suddenly the Thelemites, Crowley, Mudd, Leah and Dorothy, were gathered together in Paris, whence they all proceeded to Thuringia to meet Brother Recnartus (Traenker) and Brother Saturnus (Karl Germer) who had paid Crowley's essential debts in Paris as well as their fares. The Beast sent on ahead a copy of *The Book of the Law*, and when it arrived a certain Max Schneider promptly translated it into German. Heinrich Traenker was horrified as he read the pulsating versicles of *Liber Legis*.

Curse them! Curse them! Curse them!
With my Hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross.
I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed & blind him.

With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din.

Bahlasti! Ompehda! I spit on your crapulous creeds.

This was certainly not what Traenker had expected and he condemned *The Book of the Law* as a work of 'sinister, demoniac possession'. Without exactly agreeing with him, the Beast pointed out that there were parts of *Liber Legis* which he, even he, could not understand. Fortunately for the Thelemites, within a few days Traenker had another illumination and the more obscure and repellent parts of the book became clear and no longer repellent. Now he pronounced the book 'a glorious manifestation' and said he could condense its meaning into one word – civilisation.

Another member of the German Branch of the O.T.O., a certain Albin Grau, was also put off by the anti-Christian amoral spirit of *The Book of the Law*. In view of the black magician, Adolf Hitler, whom Germany was soon to follow, Herr Grau's sentiments on the bible of Crowleyanity are not without interest.

Unhappily, too late I have been made acquainted with the contents of *Liber Legis*, a book branded with the triple KEOU. I thus to my horror got a real glimpse of the future reconstruction, as planned by the A : A : ., of a primitive world order which suggests the blackest days of Atlantis. If these ideas had been clearly in my knowledge at the time, Sir Crowley may rest assured that I would not have put myself so certainly before the chariot of the A : A : . and been invited the 'boot' for services rendered in good faith, however poor and defective they may appear in Sir Crowley's eyes. The Germans have had this 'boot' too often without unfortunately learning wisdom thereby . . .

There was one Astral attack which the Beast defeated by an act of magick, sufficient in itself to shift the doubts of the sceptical. Traenker kept chickens in the garden. One night a cock escaped from its coop and flew through the window of Crowley's bedroom. But the Beast was protected; Dorothy was surprised to see him surrounded by an inverted cone of blue light.

The story of Leah Hirsig begins to tail off. There are no more of her magical diaries, and Crowley does not mention her again in his. She was thirty-five when she met the Beast. Of her frame of mind then, there is this clue. 'You always look as though you are about to cry,' Crowley once said to her. On this Leah commented, 'I have felt that way for – oh, all my life.'

Another man child, which gave her joy, was born to her; she called it Al, the keyword of *The Book of the Law*, a Hebrew word for God. The father, this time, was William George Barron. There is no happy ending to this story. Barron did not marry her but disappeared eastwards instead – to Leah's indifference, she did not seem to like him.

She still had, however, the ever-faithful Norman Mudd, in whose diary is sadly recorded that she had broken her mother's heart. They lived together for some time among the Brothers and Sisters of the German branch of the O.T.O. An old lady, Martha Küntzel (Sister I.W.E.), who had met Crowley at the summer conference of 1925, and who was sustained in her last years by the Law of Thelema, put them up in her cramped Leipzig lodgings. (Martha Küntzel, friend of Madame Blavatasky, had been a freemason and an occultist all her life, wandering feverishly from one cult to another, until *The Book of the Law* put her on the right path.)

During the next year or two, Leah still found occasion to write to Crowley – rare, dry letters on matters relating to *The Book of the Law* and the destiny of mankind; but finally Crowley, distrustful of her intentions, issued from his Paris hotel an encyclical condemning her as a centre of pestilence and enjoining all the members of the Order to destroy unread any communication from her.

What had she done now? It is written in the Comment on *The Book of the Law* that 'the study of this Book is forbidden... those who discuss the contents of this Book are to be shunned by all...'

This, then, was the formal accusation: Leah Hirsig, sometime Scarlet Woman of the Beast 666, had discussed and studied *The Book of the Law*! The charge was unanswerable; they had been discussing and studying it together for years. The Beast, however, offered her this means of expiation: she must supply him with 'the evidence required to convict Norman Mudd of a felony'. According to Crowley, O.P.V. had stolen some of his books. (Was there anyone he did not accuse of theft?)

The starving Mudd, hated and despised by Crowley for no cause that reason can discover, had sold some copies of *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz* and some sets of *The Equinox* to supply his Master with funds, and had kept back part of the price to carry on the Great Work.

But Leah did not give up her only companion and friend to the

wrath of the Beast. Instead she sent Crowley a printed and signed circular renouncing her role as Scarlet Woman.

Mudd's faith underwent an unexpected transformation. The New Aeon was true enough but it was not the Aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child, of Horus; for Crowley was a False Prophet. He had been wrong in worshipping the Beast; he should have directed these attentions to himself. And he started to announce that he, even he, Omnia Pro Veritate, was the World Teacher that mankind awaited. This so annoyed his hostess, Martha Küntzel, that she called him a saboteur and turned him out into the street.

There is one last document, the strangest of the thelemic writings, Leah Hirsig's final word to Aleister Crowley. It was sent from Spain, dated 6 September 1930, and is in the neat handwriting of Norman Mudd. It is addressed to 'E. A. Crowley, Esq.,' and commences 'Dear Sir'. It concludes with 'Yours truly', and is signed 'Leah Hirsig'. There is no thelemic salutation of Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law and no corollary of Love is the Law, love under Will at its conclusion. There is no law and no love about this letter; it is Leah's final divestment of all Crowley's creed and Crowley's shadow – a document terrifying in its implications of demoniac possession.

At various times during my past intercourse with you, acting in part under your inspiration, I contracted various oaths or similar bonds.

I now notify you that all promises which I have ever made to you personally – whether called or described as *oaths*, *vows*, *obligations*, *pledges* or what not – whether sealed by my signature or by my spoken word or in any other way; – all bonds, enactions and instruments soever which, in their intendments, give you any formal claim on me – are now defunct in my sight.

I define the symbol \ddot{X} to mean a certain Ceremony wherein you are to declare to me, in a form approved by me, that I have no obligations to you personally.

I define the symbol \bar{X} to mean the duration which commences on this present date – September 6, 1930 – and continues until, but not after, I give you a formal Certificate stating that the Ceremony \ddot{X} has been duly performed.

Throughout the duration \overline{X} I shall ignore, at my pleasure, (1) any intimation that any communication from you to me is confidential or restricted in any other way, and (2) any written

missive purporting to be from you which is not signed with your name – Crowley – in a handwriting which I can recognize as yours.

I define the symbol X to mean the moment of Greenwich Mean Noon on October 6, 1930.

I define the term Lyg to be a common noun meaning a proposition which I offer to the cognizance of another – some supposed intelligence other than myself – as if I believed the proposition whereas in fact I disbelieve it.

Lygs need not be communicated in words. I can utter and convey Lygs in any medium of communication: in gesture and action generally, pictures, odours, dress, music – positive signs, shows, seemings, cues and clues of innumerable kinds – as also, negatively, by significant silence and various other arts of refrainment...

[&c, &c]

Crowley's only comment on this document, Leah's magic against this *magick*, is pencilled at the head of it: 'Composed by Norman Mudd – lunatic and thief.'

Thus Leah Hirsig, the Scarlet Woman, renounced Aleister Crowley, the Beast 666, and passed out of his life. Of all the women whom Crowley ever loved or pretended to love or thought he loved, she came closest to his heart, and had the greatest claim on his allegiance, but he cast her aside nevertheless and strode on glorifying the deathless gods. And neither he nor any of his fellow Thelemites or friends ever heard of her again. It was rumoured that she became a Roman Catholic and in that great Church found at last her peace.

At some time in the thirties she returned to the United States; and during 1949, while I was writing my biography of the Beast, one of her sisters wrote to ask me not to mention Leah's name as she had resumed her vocation of schoolmistress. For this reason I called her in the first edition of *The Great Beast*, Leah Faesi. She died in 1951.

The fate of Norman Mudd was as tragic as his parents had feared it would be. The Beast had prophesied, or claimed to have prophesied, that O.P.V. would die by drowning; and to his ears came the rumour that, one day in the early thirties, this prophecy had been fulfilled in the waters of the Island of Guernsey. I wrote to the Town Clerk, who passed my letter to the Island Police. The Chief Officer kindly replied:

I beg to inform you that a man giving the name of Norman Mudd, age about 50 years and an address as No. 220 Arlington Road, N.W.1, arrived in this island on the 6th May, 1934, and took up residence at the Manor Hotel, Forest, Guernsey. On the 16th June, the proprietor of the hotel reported that Mudd had been missing from the hotel since 7 o'clock the previous evening. Police conducted a search and at 12 noon on the 16th a body later identified as that of Mudd was recovered from Portelet Bay. The body was clothed with cycle clips around the bottom of the trousers, the trouser legs and pockets were filled with stones.

Enquiries were made by the Metropolitan Police and it was discovered that No. 220 Arlington Road was a London County Council Common Lodging House. Police were unable to trace relatives or friends. Mudd was known at the address given and the description furnished by the porter agreed with that of the drowned man.

An inquest was held on the 18th June, 1934, and a verdict of 'suicide' returned. Deceased was buried in plot No. 8, grave No. 1 in the New Cemetery, Forest, Guernsey, on the 20th June, 1934. The service was conducted by the Rector of the Parish.

Thus died Norman Mudd, MA, Professor of Applied Mathematics, Grey University College, Bloemfontein, author of the paper, *The Gravitational Potential and Energy of Harmonic Deformations of any Order*, and of the pamphlet *Open Letter to Lord Beaverbrook*; a Neophyte with the motto Omnia Pro Veritate of the Great White Brotherhood of Light called the A.A., 'guide, philosopher and friend' of the Beast 666.

1 Crowley's description of Mudd in The Confessions.

27 A NEST OF SERPENTS

Sometime during 1926–7, while Crowley was dodging debts in Paris, and Tunis (and the *Yi King* was advising him to be 'patient, tenacious, modest, ashamed, friendly, appealing, tremulous and grateful' as a means of overcoming these difficulties), he heard that his Magical Son, Achad, had gone mad. The strain of his Grade of Master of the Temple had been too much for him, and his birth as a 'babe of the Abyss' had aborted.

The attainment of this Grade, according to Crowley, but not according to Mathers, Yeats, or anyone else, is marked by the Adept's pouring every drop of his blood, i.e. his life as an individual, into the Cup of the Scarlet Woman 'who represents Universal Impersonal Life'. In other words, he must extinguish himself as an individual and become like a god – a very dangerous condition for a human. And in case anyone has forgotten it, the golden cup held by the whore of Babylon is filled with 'abominations and filthiness of her fornication' (*Revelation*). Crowley, I suppose, would not have denied that this state of affairs is akin to madness.

It is not surprising that Achad, a pale reflection of Crowley, went mad. The account of his madness contains nothing unusual. Briefly, he came to England and joined the Roman Catholic Church with the secret notion of converting members of that Church to the doctrine of *thelema*. He did not stay long in England, and upon his return to Vancouver, he wandered out into the city clad only in a raincoat which, at an appropriate moment, he flung off, revealing his nakedness and crying aloud that he had given up all the Veils of Illusion.

Crowley ascribed Achad's failure to an Inflated Ego which he, Crowley, had done his best to inflate by example and encouragement. Achad, he said, had gone too swiftly from the Grade of Neophyte to that of Master of the Temple; that is to say, he had not properly absorbed the earlier grades. Furthermore, he had not written a Thesis on the Universe which is the special task of the Grade of Adeptus Exemptus, and therefore he should not have attempted to cross the Abyss.

In due course, Achad recovered and pronounced Aiwass, Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, a Malignant Intelligence and 'the enemy of mankind'. He went on to explain that the New Aeon, in which he believed, was that of Maat, the goddess of wisdom and justice, not Horus, as Crowley had announced. Crowley had already expelled him from the Order; when he heard that Achad had turned against *thelema* and Aiwass, he evoked all the Demon Servitors to destroy him utterly.

Having got rid of Leah and Dorothy Olsen, Crowley returned to Paris and rented a furnished flat at 55 Avenue de Suffren. New Scarlet Women came and went in quick succession: Ninette, 'a full Martinique Negress', Katherine E., 'a superb natural vampire', and others, all of whom helped to stir up the magical current and console him for the loss of Leah, the Scarlet Woman par excellence. But a list of Crowley's mistresses at this time will get us nowhere. Mention, however, should be made of Margaret Binetti. He met her towards the end of 1926, and they soon became engaged to be married; but she did not last long, magick not being her métier. Her name appears again among eight mistresses and one lover (Camille)¹ in Paris alone; six white, three black. 'I am now eliminating these one by one. The task may be regarded as finished by 6th February 1927 era vulgari, when I eliminated No. 4 [Margaret Binetti] by burning the talisman of Jupiter which protected her. Her callous heartlessness and hypocritical falsity doom her to a dire end.'

He rose from all their embraces 'to answer the call of the Three Mountains to save the world from destruction', that is to replace dying Christianity with insurgent Crowleyanity.

The Mediterranean Manifesto was Crowley's last magical pronouncement to the world but not, of course, his last magical announcement to his followers. Mudd had started the campaign in England by sneaking into the London headquarters of the Theosophical Society and pinning the manifesto on to the notice board. Crowley, who did not doubt that he was, in fact, the World Teacher, conducted the campaign with customary vigour and naïvety.

'The only way of getting proper publicity,' he wrote an American friend of his, Montgomery Evans – the Master Therion was expansive to anyone who showed an interest in his work:

1 'I have a wonderful letter from my lover Camille, full of burning passionate words, more than I could have dreamed possible' (*The Magical Record*, May 1921).

is to arrange for the World Teacher campaign. If this is done as it should be, there is bound to be a big scrap [with the Theosophists] with unlimited stories of excellent news value. I propose you should begin in this way: 'The World Teacher informs the public that Doctor Annie Besant is in error when she states that He will manifest through Mr Krishnamurti in December, or at any other time.' I think this will go better if you make a certain amount of mystery about the identity of the said World Teacher. You can say that you know who he is and how to approach him for the purpose of an interview, but you should keep me out of it until you have made some sort of contract for the exclusive story.

To judge from a statement in one of Dorothy Olsen's letters, Crowley's sideshow seems to have made some impression. On 27 January 1926, she wrote to Montgomery Eyans:

We have a most beautiful villa at La Marsa half an hour's journey from Tunis, and A.C. is very happy here, doing great work, and at last this World Teacher business seems to have caught fire everywhere and we are being interviewed by newspapers and the newspapers seem to be taking it up as quite important news. We will send you some clippings in our next letter.

The concubines of the Beast suddenly sort themselves out. By the second half of 1928, there were only two contestants for the vacant post of Scarlet Womanhood. One was a Polish lady, Kasimira Bass, otherwise known as 'the Woman from Samaria', the other hailed from the Central American Republic of Nicaragua, Maria Teresa Ferrari de Miramar. He called her 'Old Nile', and by other titles, but she was mainly known as the High Priestess of Voodoo.

With Kasimira he had more than a brief whirl. He was genuinely fond of her and expressed considerable praise for her magical qualities. Indeed, she might have attained high status in the A:A: had not Maria Teresa, whose magical potential was enormous, suddenly crossed her path. By what means the gods had directed Maria Teresa's steps towards the Beast, I do not know.

The end of Kasimira came slowly but unmistakably. The Abra-Melin demons released by their evocations, instead of forwarding the Great Work, turned round and poisoned their relationship so that they spent the whole night quarrelling about money and other irrelevancies. When Kasimira finally broke away, Crowley was able to get on with the Great Work and make up for lost time.

Relieved from the strain of Kasimira, I have been able to start serious magick with ritual precautions. The climax of the first ceremony was marked, as it should be, by the sudden arising of a violent wind; and subsequent ceremonies have been equally notable. I think the results are already beginning to appear; and, bar accidents, something important should break out during the week.

There was one last appearance of Madame Bass in Crowley's life; she met Señora de Miramar by chance on the bus somewhere in Paris. It was a case of when Scarlet Woman meets Scarlet Woman; the magnetism and counter-magnetism were immense. The High Priestess of Voodoo, thinking that sulphuric acid was about to be thrown into her eyes, bolted. Commented Crowley on Madame Bass's attitude, 'She was furious at having lost her last chance in life', and he dismissed her as 'off her chump'.

Maria was greatly impressed by Crowley, both as a man and a magician. She was undoubtedly in love with him. She had been married once or twice before and had a child. Such was her belief in the Beast's powers as a Magus that she urged him to get astride a unicorn and depart in secret on 20 January 1929 for Jericho.

During 1928, a young Englishman who had survived Eton and passed through Cambridge with distinction—he was in the Fellowship class—began to seek for clues to the hidden glories of the world in the pages of *The Equinox*. He was soon eager to make the acquaintance of the head of the A.A. His letter of inquiry was forwarded to Crowley in Paris. The Beast invited him to come over, and met him at the Paris airport. The gods take away and the gods give back. No less than nine Brethren, all of great promise and some of marked achievement, had crashed on to the rocks; and here was the tenth, Brother Volo Intelligere ('I Wish to Understand'), the title he took when he entered the A.A.

These, then, were the main disciples of the Beast at this period of his life: his Scarlet Woman (Maria Teresa); Brother Saturnus (the Rich Man from the West); and Brother Volo Intelligere, whom one might call the Rich Boy from Gloucestershire. There was also the honorary secretary, Israel Regardie, whom Crowley called the Serpent; he lived up to his title by copying the Golden

Dawn rituals from *The Equinox* and elsewhere with a view to publishing them in a work under his own name.¹

That aspect of the Great Work which was now occupying Crowley's attention was the publication of Magick in Theory and Practice, the most important of his writings. He had been collecting material for a book of this kind for a long time, ever since, in fact, he had published Book Four, Parts I and II, during 1911 and 1912. Magick is an extension and flowering of this early work. It begins with an explanation of what magick is, namely a technique whereby one can make Nature obey one's will by bringing the power behind phenomena to heel with appropriate words uttered, and actions performed, in the right frame of mind. In Magick, Crowley recounts certain basic rituals as taught in the Golden Dawn, such as that of transferring one's consciousness to the Astral Plane, the banishing and invoking rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram, and the Cabbalistic method of communicating with discarnate intelligences, spirits and demons, and the testing of them when evoked. In addition, he gives his own technique for arousing the Kundalini Shakti (power) at the base of the spine, to unite it with the cosmic consciousness.

On all these conventional magical techniques, he has erected his own edifice of thelema, that is to say, he has infused the Golden Dawn teachings with his own current as stated, if not explained, in The Book of the Law. For this reason, Magick in Theory and Practice is a difficult book to understand, a city within a city, unless the key to that inner city is supplied by an intimate knowledge of Crowley's life, companions, workings of a sexual and drug nature; then it becomes clearer. Crowley had made, in fact, a magical system out of his Golden Dawn and OTO experiences, and in particular out of his own sexual tastes and obsessions, the whole cleverly epitomised in the phrase, Do what thou wilt. It is one vast confession: Perdurabo, the Great Wild Beast 666, the Master Therion, Sir Aleister Crowley, and Saint Aleister Crowley are all quoted and praised.

Brothers Saturnus and Volo Intelligere agreed to pay the cost of the publication of *Magick*; but all the printers they approached declined to accept the work. Apart from the fact that no sensible printer in Britain of those days wanted to have anything to do with Aleister Crowley, who had been denounced as a cannibal, the manuscript itself contained remarks which the ordinary per-

1 When this happened, Crowley commented '. . . pure theft from The Equinox'.

son thought mad if not actionable. For example, under the rubric of *The Bloody Sacrifice and Matters Cognate* was this amazing statement: 'A male child of perfect innocence and high intelligence is the most satisfactory and suitable victim,' with its gory footnote: 'It appears from the Magical Records of Frater Perdurabo that He made this particular sacrifice on an average about 150 times every year between 1912 e.v. and 1928 e.v.' (But as a matter of fact Crowley was not competing with Gilles de Rais, and the passage has another and secret meaning, but printers, not being Adepts in the Secret Sciences, were not to know that.)

In the end the work was taken on by the Lecram Press in Paris, and in due course it appeared, one of those unusually large curiosities of literature, 'published for subscribers only'. It culled hardly any reviews and was completely ignored by the public at large, until a generation later when it reappeared in a scandalously pirated American edition. This edition was facilitated by the unfairness of American copyright laws, which enable crooks who call themselves publishers to rob European authors, their executors, and heirs. The pirated American edition of *Magick* was of course issued without any preface, or introduction, or exegesis of any kind.

Crowley's hopes were flying high for the success of his book. In this respect, authors are incorrigible, due to the mistaken view that the world is as interested in their preoccupations as they themselves are. He expected that the publication of *Magick* would, for once and for ever, put him on the map. He wrote to Brother Volo Intelligere: 'People generally do want a book on Magick. There never has been an attempt at one since the Middle Ages, except Lévi's.' Brother I Wish to Understand was mildly sceptical, to his Master's irritation.

Crowley and his followers decided to employ a journalist called C. de Vidal Hunt to prepare the press for the appearance of Magick; he was to be the publicity agent for the work. For his part, de Vidal Hunt had been persuaded that Crowley was a literary man of great talent who had been for many years the subject of unjust attacks from newspapers and people who failed completely to understand him. He did not remain in Crowley's employment for long. According to Crowley, they quarrelled over a marriage which they were trying to arrange between an American millionairess who was then living in Paris and a penniless relative of the Spanish Royal Family, one Don Luis Fernando de Bourbon.

A NEST OF SERPENTS

The scheme came to nothing and while it was coming to nothing, Crowley warned the American millionairess and denounced de Vidal Hunt, and de Vidal Hunt called at the Sûreté Générale and denounced Aleister Crowley. In a letter to Brother V.I., dated 16 December 1928, de Vidal Hunt wrote:

I wished to suspend my work, I said, until I had a serious proposition to offer you, adding that any such proposition could only be based on Crowley's doing or writing anything acceptable for publicity purposes. You were quite agreed with me on all the points and I as a publicity man and journalist still hoped that Crowley would lend himself to decent publicity. Nothing has come from it except a timely awakening on my part. Because a lady of social standing to whom I unfortunately had introduced him, refused to receive him at her château, Crowley insulted her in the most ordinary discharged-flunkey fashion and tried to intimidate me with threats of the police for some two or three books of his I had in my possession. I apologised to the lady who is an old dear friend of mine and got a good scolding for having 'put her in contact with such an individual'.

Crowley was suspicious to the point of paranoia of the actions of those who, he knew, were not too friendly towards him. He thought, for example, that Kasimira had taken 5,000 francs from the safe, went to inform the police about it, then discovered the missing money beneath the statue of Ho Tai, while moving Ho Tai from the sitting-room to the bedroom.

On the afternoon of 17 January 1929, as a consequence of de Vidal Hunt's visit to the Sûreté Générale, an inspector from the Préfecture de Police called on Crowley. The Serpent agreed with the Beast that it was more than a coincidence; it was the beginning of a magical attack against the appearance of the book.

The inspector sat himself comfortably in the arm-chair, looked fixedly at Crowley and asked:

'Why are you called the King of Depravity?'

'People call me all sorts of things,' replied Crowley.

'Do you take drugs?'

'No.'

The inspector pointed to an instrument of unusual, if not infernal, design on the table, asked, 'What's that, then?'

'A coffee machine.'

According to Crowley, the inspector thought it was either a bomb or an apparatus for distilling cocaine.

'People come to consult you,' said the inspector, beginning again. 'What do you advise them to do?'

'It depends upon what I am asked.'

The subject of conversation moved away from drugs and fortune-telling to the Holy Cabbala. The inspector was mystified; he expressed the wish to study the Cabbala himself, but Crowley advised against any rash plunging into so recondite a subject.

'Why, it takes seven years uninterrupted study to begin to know anything about it.'

The inspector, by now relaxed, began to enjoy his conversation with this strange Englishman with the piercing gaze. He told Crowley quite frankly that for the first time in his life he could not understand what they were talking about. To which Crowley replied that that was quite natural for he had been trying to make himself understood for over fifty years without much success. 'It puzzled him,' said Crowley, summing up the inspector's visit, 'that I did not take money for consultations, and that I did not tell fortunes, and so on. I think he went away in a perfectly good frame of mind. But he said that he had to make a report on the subject.... So that is where the matter rests.'

The inspector's report could not have been too favourable in spite of their conversation about the Holy Cabbala, for four weeks later the Minister of the Interior signed a refus de séjour for the Beast, his High Priestess of Voodoo, and his honorary secretary, the Serpent. And a fortnight afterwards a gendarme brought round a summons for all three to attend at the Préfecture. Crowley took to his bed and the High Priestess and the Serpent went alone to the police station to learn that their presence, and that of their Master, was no longer desired in France; they must all leave within twenty-four hours.

The Beast sent a cable to Brother Volo Intelligere who was in England to come over to help in the fight, but Brother V.I. declined. The line of action Crowley had in mind was 'to stay put and go to prison instead'.

Señora de Miramar appealed to the Nicaraguan Consul, and he took her to see an official in the Ministry of the Interior who said (to quote Crowley's parody of her report on this interview): 'Of course, my dear young lady, we have nothing whatever against you. We are doing this in your own interests as you are an acquaintance of the wicked Aleister Crowley who either kills all the women he knows or drives them mad.'

The Serpent and the High Priestess obtained visas for Britain, and departed, leaving Crowley at home protected by a doctor's certificate; he would join them when he had corrected the proofs of *Magick* which were now arriving from the printer.

To the discomfort and embarrassment of the High Priestess and the Serpent, they were halted at Tilbury by the emigration authorities, locked in their cabins, then returned to France. They managed to obtain visas for Belgium and reached Brussels six days after they had set out from Paris.

On Friday, 12 April 1929, Crowley held an advance copy of *Magick in Theory and Practice* in his hand and shouted 'Victory!' On the following Wednesday, now fully recovered, he put on a black homburg hat, flung a cloak round his shoulders, posed for his photograph, and was heralded out of France as Sir Aleister Crowley, the English baronet and spy under two flags. He described his exit as being 'in a terrific blaze of publicity', which was no exaggeration; his expulsion from France was mentioned in the world's newspapers.

Crowley maintained that he was expelled from France for two reasons: one, as a result of the machinations of de Vidal Hunt, who sought revenge for having lost his commission as a marriage broker; two, because the inspector from the Préfecture de Police thought his coffee machine was an infernal device for distilling cocaine. But according to the *Paris Midi*, Crowley was expelled for the simple and sufficient reason that he was thought to be a secret agent for Germany, and his OTO organisation, with its German supporters, a blind.

He was furious that his Scarlet Woman should be barred from Britain and he swore to get her in even if he had to marry her. He consulted the *Yi King* who told him that marriage with Maria would be a rash act; but Crowley was not in a mood to listen to the voice of wisdom. To make Maria his wife was now his main line of magical attack.

Meanwhile Brother Volo Intelligere had had a friendly call from Colonel Carter of Scotland Yard. Carter wanted to know what magical potions Brother V.I. had been brewing recently with Britain's Worst Man. V.I. explained that the Beast was not as beastly as he was made out to be. Whereupon Colonel Carter said that he might as well see Crowley himself and he gave V.I. £10 for the Beast's fare to London.

A few days later, Beast, disciple, and detective had dinner together – to the satisfaction, presumably of the law, for Crowley was not afterwards arrested. 'Dined with Col. Carter 7.30–11.30. All clear,' recorded Crowley in his diary.

Brother V.I. said it was a happy party – wine, wit, and good feeling had flowed, a civilised way of settling differences.

Suddenly Crowley received a wire from his High Priestess, announcing that the Belgian authorities had ordered her and the Serpent to leave the country. An appeal for help was sent off to Frater Saturnus in Germany. He immediately gathered up Maria, took her to Leipzig and deposited her with Martha Küntzel. Crowley soon joined Maria and in Leipzig on 16 August 1929, at precisely 11.20 am, they were married in the presence of the British Consul. Immediately after the ceremony the Beast cast the horoscope of the event. Libra was in the ascendant, Venus semisextile, Jupiter sextile, Mercury square, Uranus opposition Moon. And the Sun made a trine with Saturn. But whether this boded good or ill, he did not say.

The same day Mr and Mrs Crowley left for London and four days later they were able to smile at a camera in a South Kensington photographic studio; then the Beast settled down and wrote an account of his expulsion from France and his subsequent marriage, entitling it 'When the Devil turned Bridegroom'.

28 THE BEAST AND THE MONSTER

CROWLEY had now reached the height of his fame or, if you will, infamy. Like Julius Caesar, he was the husband to every woman and the wife to every man. The stories about him were legion. Here is one.

John Watkins, whose bookshop of occult and mystical works still flourishes off Charing Cross Road, once invited Crowley to demonstrate his magic.

'Close your eyes,' said the Beast.

Mr Watkins did so. When he opened them a moment later, all his books had vanished from the shelves.

It was said, with what truth I do not know, that when he entered the Café Royal, a silence fell upon everyone and none dared speak till the demon Crowley had sat down. His appearance, decidedly, provoked an attitude of awe: his bulk and cold, staring eyes set in his fat, feminine face; his shaved head, oddness of dress, strange rings on his fingers, his sweet, slightly nauseous smell, and, finally, that impalpable sense of a man which poets and occultists call aura – relentless, mocking, the aura of the Wanderer of the Waste and the Great Wild Beast. Among the Lamas of Tibet are those initiates who are said to have the power of hypnotizing and causing death from a distance.

'Arose in my might,' wrote Crowley in his diary – he was somewhere in Germany, probably Berlin – 'and stopped the gramophone in the Terminus by threatening all present with immediate death.'

The aroma of Aleister Crowley came from the 'sex-appeal' ointment with which he smeared himself. He called this unguent Ruthvah: the Perfume of Immortality. It was made up of one part ambergris, two parts musk, and three parts civet, aphrodisiacs which contributed to his attraction for women; and horses, too, if it is true, as he said, that they whinnied after him when he passed along the street. 'It must be rubbed into the body,' wrote the Master Therion,

1 The elder Curio, quoted by Suetonius. When Crowley took the woman's role in XI° operations, he assumed the name of Alys, the feminine form of Aleister.

particularly at the roots of the hair where the skin is not too tightly stretched, so thoroughly that the subtle perfume of the preparation is not detected, or even suspected, by others. The user is thus armed with a most powerful weapon, the more potent for being secret, against the deepest elements in the nature of those whom it is wished to attract. They obey, and they are all the more certainly compelled to obey, because they do not know that they are being commanded.

To the public at large, who read about him mainly in *John Bull*, he was, simply, the Worst Man in Britain or, as he was finally described at the very peak of his fame, the Wickedest Man in the World. No one knew exactly why he was so wicked, for in none of the popular accounts of him was his wickedness demonstrated. The Gnostic and Tantric sources of his philosophy were not even suspected, and the heretical nature of his views, in this age of unbelief, were ignored. In fact, the portrait of the Beast 666 drawn for the readers of the *Sunday Express* and *John Bull* amounted to no more than that of a bogeyman who frightens little children to bed. 'I serve my great Master Satan,' he wrote in one of his less serious confessions, 'and that august Council composed of Beelzebub, Lucifuge, Asmodeus, Belphegor, Baal, Adrammelech, Lilith and Nahema.'

'I'm very slack with this diary,' wrote Crowley on 1 February 1929. The entries in the Magical Record had grown brief; he no longer had the energy or the interest to describe in detail what he was doing every day, only to record his occasional composing of a pornographic poem, amid short sentences such as, 'long orgia broke down through sheer fatigue on both sides.'

The entry for 28 June 1929 is simply, 'Signed contract with Mandrake, £50 advance,'

This was the advance on royalties for *The Confessions*; he had at last found a publisher after William Collins for this great work of half a million words.

The Mandrake Press was a small and ephemeral firm of publishers, founded by Edward Goldston, a bookseller in Museum Street, all the practical work for which was done by his Australian partner P. R. Stephensen whom everyone called Inky. The name Mandrake had been Inky's suggestion. The first book they published was *The Paintings of D. H. Lawrence*, 1929, 'privately printed for subscribers only', limited to an edition of 510 copies. It was a success and Goldston then left it to Stephensen to find

other works to publish, but D. H. Lawrence's novels were tied up with other publishers, and in 1930 he died anyhow; James Joyce had nothing to give them. The only other author of consequence whom Inky knew was Aleister Crowley. Inky, in spite of being a member of the Communist Party, was a great admirer of the philosophy of *thelema* and Crowley's literary style.

The Confessions were projected in six volumes, the first two of which, in spite of quarrels between Goldston and Crowley, appeared in 1930, by which time the great world slump had begun and the public's interest in limited editions was rapidly falling. In April 1930, Crowley asked the Yi King, 'How shall I obtain effective control of the Mandrake Press Ltd? Hexagram VI. Sung. Be careful: don't push too far. Be friendly.'

He persuaded Brothers Saturnus and Volo Intelligere to put up £1,000 each, £500 of which Crowley, as a gesture of independence, diverted to another struggling firm of publishers, the Aquila Press, a transfusion which helped to ruin the one and was insufficient to save the other. Major Thynne also invested some money in the new Mandrake and became a director.

During its brief existence, the Mandrake Press managed to bring out, in addition to the *The Confessions*, these works of Crowley: his novel on a theme of magick, *Moonchild*; a booklet of three stories, *The Stratagem*; an arid apologia of Crowley, compiled from press cuttings, by Percy Reginald Stephensen, *The Legend of Aleister Crowley*, an attempt to demolish Crowley's evil reputation which Crowley had so painstakingly built up – his life's work, in fact. Naturally Crowley quarrelled with Saturnus and Volo Intelligere, who were now directors of the Mandrake, and dragged the firm out of existence.

Victor Neuburg reviewed Stephensen's booklet for *The Free-thinker*. He had tried but failed to get out of his system the man who, during 1909, had turned him into a camel, and who had evoked in his presence on top of a mountain that mighty demon Choronzon. (And that mighty demon had joined them in their dancing until he had fallen on Brother Omnia Vincam and smitten him.) In Neuburg's eyes, Crowley was the foulest or the greatest man the world had ever seen. His immense admiration for Crowley was mixed with an equal part of dread. An un-

1 One of Neuburg's relatives, fearing for Victor's safety, ran all the way to Algiers to look for him, but found only Crowley. 'Where's Victor?' he asked. 'There,' said Crowley, pointing to a camel. 'I've turned him into it.'

expected ringing of his front door bell would awaken him from his reverie and make him start with fear lest the Beast had come for him; for, on three separate occasions during the early 1920s, his maid, after answering the door, had run back jabbering that a mysterious, thin-faced woman with burning eyes (Alostrael) was standing outside; she had not spoken but offered a sign – the Mark of the Beast which she had revealed between her naked breasts when her coat had fallen open.

The two expensively-produced volumes of *The Confessions* might have paid their way or even made some profit had the bookshops taken them; but such was Crowley's reputation that the salesman employed by the Mandrake Press found that he could get hardly any orders for them. Booksellers were not having Crowley at any price, especially with his demoniac self-portrait on the cover and the A for Aleister in the form of a phallus with testicles in the oversize signature beneath it.

Aleister Prowley

There is something self-conscious and deliberate about this phallic A. On the other hand, Crowley had long identified himself with the penis, just as he identified his mistress – any mistress – with the vagina. He did not consider a woman as a person in her own right. Thus Leah Hirsig was 'pure Yoni decorated by the rest of her, in the same way as I am pure Lingam with frills' (*The Magical Record*, 17 August 1920). Crowley was phallic-force. Later, when Leah had begun to withdraw her phantastic projection and to see Crowley as he really was, she addressed him in a letter with the words – *Dear Old Prick* (as a salutation).

Within a few weeks of marriage to Maria, Crowley must have reflected that the *Yi King* was right again. 'Don't do it,' the fates had warned. 'A rash act.'

In the new year, the Beast was invited to give a lecture at the Oxford University Poetry Society. He proposed reading a paper on Gilles de Rais, who was a kind of Master Therion of mediaeval France. According to Crowley, Gilles de Rais was a genuine black magician.

The subject was an interesting one; the lecturer made it ideal. The hall would have been packed but the lecture did not take place. Ronald Arbuthnott Knox, the Catholic Chaplain of the University, heard about it, and wrote to Hugh Speaight, the Secretary of the Poetry Club. I do not know what Father, later Monsignor, Knox said in his letter or what part he played in the affair, but Speaight wrote forthwith to Crowley:

I am writing to tell you that we have been unfortunately forced to cancel Monday's meeting of the Poetry Society. It has come to our knowledge that if your proposed paper is delivered, disciplinary action will be taken, involving not only myself but the rest of the committee of the Society.

In these circumstances you will, I trust, understand why we have had to cancel the meeting. I feel I must apologize to you for the trouble I have caused you.

Rather tame, this, in the light of the behaviour of students to-day (1970).

So Crowley was banned from Oxford as he had been banned from Cambridge twenty years before. According to one newspaper report, the Vice-Chancellor of the University was said to be greatly annoyed at the impression conveyed that the banning of Aleister Crowley was an official one.

In an interview with the Oxford Mail, Crowley said:

Perhaps the refusal to let me lecture has come because Gilles de Rais is said to have killed 800 children in ritual murder and, in some way, this was connected with myself, since the accusation that I have not only killed but eaten children is one of the many false statements that have been circulated about me.

The Mandrake Press speedily published the lecture as a pamphlet, and Oxford undergraduates, equipped with sandwich boards, sold it in the High Street, price 6d. It is dull to read but it would not have been a dull lecture had Crowley given it.

1930 was another full year for the Beast. It had begun well with the Oxford débâcle. In the spring he went off with Maria to Germany, quarrelling furiously with her.

His arrival in Germany produced an article about him in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. His achievements were reviewed. He had met, apparently, Dr Paul Bauer, soon off to the Himalayas to climb Kangchenjunga, and given him the advice (which Bauer did not take) that the only way to the summit is via the Yalung Glacier, Crowley's route during 1905. 'If the expedition follows this advice it must reach the summit – or perish. The Germans have in this undertaking every chance to succeed.'

In Germany, with the money of the Rich Man from the West and that of the wife of the RM from the W, Crowley soon forgot about Maria. He raced around Berlin with a 19-year-old artist, Hanni Jaeger, whom he had found in the studio of a painter named Steiner. He called her the Monster and wrote in his diary, 'I am quite in love with this Hanni.' Then: 'The idiot Maria, sneaking meanly into my private papers, thinks this means some sexual nonsense. It would serve her right if the jest turned into earnest.' Love released him a little from his dependence upon drugs; lack of love drove Maria, as it had driven her predecessor, Rose, to drink.

He returned to England, leaving Maria in Leipzig. Hanni's love for him stirred him deeply and brought back some of his confidence and hope. He wandered to Cambridge, thinking of her all the time, and revisited after twenty years, the scenes of his rampant youth. But when the day was over, he wrote of Trinity College, 'Quelle déception. Whole thing like a doll's house, small and almost soulless.'

He wanted to show his paintings and drawings in London but could not find an art gallery to take them. Goldston declined to allow him to use the offices of the Mandrake. Thirteen of Lawrence's paintings had been removed by the police from the Warren Gallery where they were on exhibition after they had been collected from the Mandrake Press. He thought of showing them at Langham Place, on the premises of his other publishing house, the Aquila Press (the leading lights of which were Wyn Henderson and the writer James Cleugh); at this time he was negotiating the lease of a flat there, and it seems that he would have shown his paintings at the Aquila (to the annoyance or not of the custodians of public order), had not John Bull, never far from his tracks, heard of the plan and used it for another attack. 'John Bull rot,' wrote the Beast in his diary after reading a glowing account of

1 See D. H. Lawrence and his world by Harry T. Moore and Warren Roberts, 1966.

himself and his latest misdeeds. He consulted as usual the Yi King. 'Shall any action be taken about it; if so, what?' The Chinese Oracle sighed and replied, 'Leave it alone.' The owner or agents of the premises in Langham Place also read about their prospective tenant in John Bull. They promptly cancelled the lease, which had not yet been signed, and asked Crowley, who had only temporary residence there, to leave. The Beast sorted out 160 paintings and drawings and dispatched them to Germany; he would hold his exhibition in Berlin. His friends gave him a farewell cocktail party, at which he left Maria drunk on the floor.

In Berlin, unencumbered with Maria, he was able to achieve his aim. 'Met and won Hanni Jaeger. Dismissed wife, without notice.' Maria had served the Beast, her Master, for one whole year, and

was now turned loose.

The thelemic fervour which had seized him during 1923 in Tunis, while the forlorn Mudd¹ had plodded after him, had long since evaporated; he was still, of course, the Logos of the Aeon, but the Great Work had become just a phrase, and the Law of Thelema merely a subject of conversation. And he no longer performed ritual magic; he only worked on his own with one female assistant. Between parties and quarrels he schemed to keep effective control of the Mandrake and corrected the galleys of the third volume of *The Confessions*² which contained the account of his finest achievement: the Great Revelation in Cairo during the spring of 1904, when the gods had chosen him for their purpose. There was nothing left for him to do now but wait for the inevitable world recognition of his genius.

At the end of August, he decided that it was time he withdrew into another Great Magical Retirement. Like the sage Lao-tzu on his Magical Retirement, he took a young maiden (Hanni) with him, went first to London, keeping of course out of the way of the prowling Maria, the former High Priestess of Voodoo, now the high priestess of nothing and nobody. Brother Volo Intelligere had found her lodgings in Hampstead, was doing his best to help her, but all his pleas on her behalf left the Beast unmoved. On

1 'Clodd was bad enough,' wrote Crowley to Brother O.P.V., 'but when that Clodd, by dint of being pissed upon, dissolves into Mudd, good-night!'

2 The Mandrake Press collapsed before the third volume had time to appear; it was not published until after Crowley's death, during 1969 by Cape, the whole work in one large volume, edited by Symonds and Grant.

Friday, 29 August, Crowley and Hanni stole away together to Southampton with tickets to Lisbon in their pockets and little else. But the Beast was not worried about money; something or somebody would be bound to turn up. And if not, Brother V.I. or Brother Saturnus would have to come to the rescue of their Master.

He knew one person in Lisbon, the excellent and distinguished poet, Fernando Pessoa. They had been corresponding for a year and the poet had invited the magician, should he happen to be passing through the town of Lisbon, to call on him. Pessoa spoke fluent English and had even written poems in English. (In the British Museum are three paper-bound collections of his English poems, some good plain verse, the rest of a kind which could be published only in English in his own country or in the Portuguese tongue in England; Pessoa, like Crowley, was fascinated by the myth of the Great God Pan.)

Crowley sent him a cable to say he was on his way. Off the coast of Spain he thought it would be a good idea to go round the world instead. He wrote to Brother V.I., upon whose hands he had left the starving Maria: 'We shall bolt for a fishing village . . . then to the Galapagos, Tahiti, China, India, and so to bed.'

His acts of sex-magic with the Monster had for their object health, money, success at the Great Work, *La Vita Nuova*.

On 2 September, the steamship *Alcantara* docked at Lisbon, and Pessoa was at the quayside to welcome the great English magus and his young pretty German wife.

'Pessoa met us: a very nice man.'

He booked a room at the Hotel de l'Europe.

After the Beast had spent a day wandering about Lisbon, he commented: 'God once tried to wake up Lisbon – with an earthquake; he gave it up as a bad job.'

They went bathing in the sea, invoked the gods with sex and magic, ascended to the Astral Plane with the aid of drugs.

On 7 September they had lunch with Pessoa.

The Monster's visions were encouraging. 'She sees easily, clearly and correctly, but does not hear, or know, how to deal with the visions yet. But she saw her own astral as Our Lady Nuit – the Body of the Stars.'

That is to say, she had moulded her own astral substance or aura in the shape of the Egyptian goddess. Nuit was probably arched over her.

They walked along the shore, passed the town of Cascais, to

Boca do Inferno, a funnel of ragged rock hollowed out by the waves. For foam and noise, when the wind is blowing hard from the south-west, Hell's Mouth is hardly surpassed. 'I wish,' said the Beast from the top of the cliffs, some 60 feet high, 'the west coast of Scotland could see it.' And in the evening, back in their hotel room, they returned to the Astral Plane and saw many visions there.

On 13 September, after drinking a lot of brandy, he performed with Hanni an act of sexual magic which had as its object, 'To bring out her art.' Unlike the Beast, the Monster had been trained as an artist. He afterwards described the operation as the best he could remember in his whole life and that Hanni (in the course of it) had looked like Clapham Junction. But it ended in her breaking out into 'a very long fit of hysterical sobbing'.

He spent the next day painting pictures and bathing in the sea. On the night of 16 September, after another particularly powerful sexual operation, which had as its object success to some scheme for finding money, Hanni descended rapidly from Astral and began to weep. She could not stand magick any longer. A quarrel broke out between them; it ended in 'a very violent midnight scene' during which the manager of the hotel burst into the room and ordered them to leave.

The Beast described the Monster's state of mind with clinical thoroughness.

Her fits of melancholy are usually connected with the wish to make a mystery of some nothing-in-particular. They are capricious as sea-fog, and as dense. It is almost as hard to get through to her as it is to a genuine melancholic. Note her pathological fear and lying . . . her locking her suit-case a dozen times in a couple of hours, though she doesn't leave the room, and there is nothing of value in it.

After a night's sleep, the Monster felt better. They packed their bags and went to the next town two miles away, Monte Estoril, a beautiful spot on the side of a hill overlooking the sea, dotted with palm, pine and eucalyptus trees and numerous villas. While the Beast was booking a room in a hotel, the Monster crept away and fled back to Lisbon.

'There is no news of her yet – 6 pm. Selah,' wrote Crowley on his first day alone. The next morning he set out for Lisbon in search of his love. He went to see Pessoa and told him of his troubles. 'Worrying like the devil,' he wrote in his diary before

going to bed. The following day he repeated this sentence and added, 'I am not going to get over this – unless she comes back.' He did find the Monster in Lisbon before nightfall, but only to learn that she was sailing back to Germany in the morning. She had met L. S. Armstrong, the American Consul, and he had advised her to go home. When Crowley discovered this, he was furious. His remarks about Armstrong are unprintable.

He urged Hanni to change her mind and continue with him on the projected trip round the world. The Monster wavered. Crowley hurriedly retired with her to his room and behind the locked door performed his magic – a ritual for the Reconsecration of Love.

There does seem to have been a kind of reconsecration or reconciliation but Hanni's urge to get away was stronger than Crowley's magick and the assistance he was getting in this matter from the gods, and in the morning she sailed in the *Lloyd Bremen*.

'And I get on with the job,' wrote Crowley, pulling himself together.

He took the train to Cintra, a little town of 7,979 inhabitants (according to *Les Guides Bleus*), described by the poet Southey as 'the most blessed corner of the whole habitable earth', and by Byron as a 'glorious Eden . . . perhaps the most beautiful little town in the whole of Europe'.

'Cintra, perfectly gorgeous,' wrote the Beast in spite of being there without his love. 'Long starlit walk.'

The thought of his wife, Maria, turned his mind sour and upon his return to the hotel, he wrote her this letter:

20th September, 1930

Dear Maria,

I did not ring you up when I passed through London because you answered my very serious letter with the most trivial every-day nonsense.

Also you have been trying to seduce Wilfred Hanchant and I know not who else. It is galling to my pride that some say you failed!

Anyhow, you had better get a man who will stand for your secret drinking and your scandalous behaviour. I gave you a great chance in life, and you threw it away. *Tant pis*!

You should get a divorce. I admit what some dithering nincompoops are still imbecile enough to call 'misconduct' on 47 occasions since August 3rd – the fatigues of constant travel

must excuse the smallness of the figure – with Hanni Jaeger of Berlin.

It will be no good asking for alimony because we are all in the soup together with the Rt Hon Lord Beaverbrook and the British Empire. Best of all to you!

> Ever, A.C.

He wandered down the coast to Hell's Mouth about 10 miles away and listened to the roaring waves. Suddenly an idea occurred to him. 'Sept. 21. I decide to do a suicide stunt to annoy Hanni. Arrange details with Pessoa.'

Accordingly, this note in Crowley's handwriting was left on the shore beside Hell's Mouth with a cigarette-case on it to keep it from blowing away: 'I cannot live without you. The other "Boca do Inferno" will get me – it will not be as hot as yours! Hjsos! Tu Li Yu.'

Crowley then went back to his hotel to celebrate the Equinox of Autumn. The next day, his prayer for the Reconsecration of Love was answered by the gods, and he received a cable from Hanni: it contained this one sentence from *The Book of the Law*: 'Love is the Law, love under will.'

Two days later he left Portugal, bound for Germany and Hanni by the overland route.

Fernando Pessoa did his part of the job well. As a publicity agent he was classes ahead of de Vidal Hunt. The *Diario de Noticias* and the *Noticias Illustrado*, two prominent Portuguese papers, carried the news of the mysterious disappearance of Sir Aleister Crowley, the famous poet and mystic. A certain Senhor Ferreira Gomes, by occupation a journalist, who happened to be passing along the shore by Hell's Mouth, stumbled on the last despairing cry of the English baronet.

The news spread with the usual rapidity. While Crowley, back in Berlin, held Hanni Jaeger in his arms, the press of Europe, anxious to fill up its columns, posed this question: Is Crowley dead? If not, what has happened to him? An article entitled L'Enigme de la Bouche d'Enfer was published in the French paper Détective, with photographs of Tu Li Yu's note and Crowley in Arab costume.

What seemed to make the case even more mysterious was the

1 'Tu Li Yu' is not the name of a Chinese sage or that of one of Crowley's incarnations, but merely 'toodle-oo' or 'good-bye'.

bald statement by the Portuguese authorities that Aleister Crowley had left the country by the usual route and method.

Were there, then, two Crowleys, one who had left Portugal, the other drowned by Hell's Mouth? The plot became so thick that Scotland Yard sent a detective to Portugal to investigate. In Britain *The Empire News* printed this piece on the affair:

FAMOUS MYSTIC OR HIS DOUBLE?

Message Pinned to Mouth of Cave: Vanished Couple

A mysterious note pinned to the entrance of a cave known as Hell's Mouth, 20 miles from Lisbon, and the disappearance of a beautiful girl figure in the mysterious case of a man believed to be Aleister Crowley, the notorious mystic, who is so well known in London and Paris.

Crowley had a revengeful mind. There was no 'Love is the Law, love under will' for those who had affronted him. Reunited with the Monster, his thoughts turned towards Armstrong, the American Consul, who had advised Hanni to go back home. He wrote this letter and persuaded Hanni to sign and send it to the man who had befriended her: 'Sir, it is my intention to forward to Washington a formal complaint of your conduct towards me on the 17th–20th instant. Yours faithfully, Hanni Jaeger.'

And all the time, the mystery of Aleister Crowley's disappearance thickened and steamed. Not unnaturally it was thought he had been murdered. The *Oxford Mail* for 14 October 1930 reported preparations being made in London to hold a séance in an attempt to contact his spirit, buffeted by ceaseless winds in the city of Dis.

Suddenly the Master reappeared in all his glory in the large and splendid rooms of the PORZA Galleries in Berlin at the opening of an exhibition of seventy-three of his paintings and drawings. Portraits of some old friends were shown: Leah Hirsig, Norman Mudd, J. W. Sullivan, also Aldous Huxley, who had recently arrived in the German capital with Sullivan. 'I thought he had a lot of money and painted him like this to flatter him,' said the Beast of his hasty sketch of Huxley.

One picture of a female monstrosity, entitled 'Ether', deserves mention because of the unusual form of sensibility that had created it. 'At first glance one might doubt the advisability of meeting this lady – alone! But back of the gleaming teeth in twisted mouth and eyes diabolically shrewd one sees an inherent good humour that proves encouraging.' Crowley explained the

source and circumstance of his inspiration: 'This portrait was done during an experiment on the effects of ether. Both artist and model had inhaled small quantities of the vapour for about an hour and, presently having got tired of what they were doing, sprang up to work. Forty minutes later there glowed complete the masterpiece which is now before you.'

These, then, and the rest, landscapes and figures, the visions of the Beast, were the exhibition he had failed to put on in England – all frightfully ugly, strongly suggestive of evil, and badly drawn.

He continued to enjoy himself with the Monster and the money of the Rich Man from the West. 'I give myself wholly to love and am serenely happy,' he wrote. But all happiness is only temporary and there are far more references to bad health, quarrels, and alarms in the series of spasmodic jottings which now make up Crowley's diary. 'Mysterious and sinister letter from Carter. Answered it – badly – after 3 goes.' This was just a note from Colonel Carter of the Yard, unofficial and not unfriendly. 'I suggest to you,' he wrote, 'that you had better cease knocking round the Continent and come back to your wife at once or you will be getting yourself into serious trouble perhaps.' Crowley's comment on this letter was written across the bottom of it: 'The impudence of the lunatic!'

The Rich Man had accepted *The Book of the Law*, his wife had not. Although she may at first have found Crowley amusing, she soon came to tolerate him only for the sake of her husband. Crowley knew he was incapable of earning any money, but he felt he should have no need to bother himself with such sordid matters. He expounded the mysteries and proclaimed the Law; he left it to others to pay the bill. Such was the fascination he caused in his followers that they paid and went on paying; they deprived themselves of necessities to supply their Master with luxuries. And Crowley, who never did things by halves, was neither modest nor grateful; he was not going to renounce his role of Great Beast, dismiss his inmost identity for such foolish considerations.

'My poor sweet baby had another melancholy fit,' he wrote of his love, Hanni Jaeger. 'Brandy makes her worse. Towards 1.00 am she came to herself, and explained quite a lot. I am nearly insane with loving her, and feeling powerless to help her as I want to.'

The Monster had by now been trained and consecrated as the Scarlet Woman of the Beast; she helped him perform the rituals; she was his seeress and stared into the shew-stone for him.

An eye in a blue circle looked mysteriously out at her. A small man blew a horn towards the sky. Two figures draped in black carried away some dead thing. Then a black-and-gold snake glided into the water. White flowers and, finally the mysterious eye again.

Midnight struck. At seven minutes past the Devil himself glared out of the shew-stone.

The following day: 'The poor child must not suffer any more. She was so tired tonight that she went to sleep instead of doing Magick, as we intended.'

The quarrels with the wife of the Rich Man from the West grew more intense. The Beast described her as being insane with fury on one occasion; and on another that she stamped and swore and cursed him. She feared and hated the Master Therion and felt that he was willing her death.

He called her a mean hag.

My dear Mr Crowley [she wrote to him]. The \$15,000 I have given to you were spent not in real constructive work but in expensive cigars, cognac, cocktails, taxis, dinners, wives and sweethearts, or anything you desired at the moment. I never expect to see one cent of this money, for I know if you ever make any you will spend it on yourself. I consider you a supremely selfish man . . . You spend as much in a week on cigars and cognac as I do in two months on myself personally. By the time I have paid the household expenses and given the rest to you and Miss Jaeger, there is no more . . . I am not trying to insult you, but I think you have a Me and God complex. God Almighty Himself would not be as arrogant as you have been, and that is one of the causes of all your troubles.

And so on.

Crowley's terse comment on this letter was, 'Answered – and adequately.'

Brother Saturnus was also at times driven by the strange behaviour of Aleister Crowley to write him letters of protest. The Beast was, doubtless, a man of such phenomenal genius that the ordinary rules of conduct could not apply to him. Like Cronus, he destroyed his own children. But, then, he would unexpectedly smile, spread a glow of interest and optimism about him, and talk of better days in the past and still to come, of magick, and of the gods whose guiding hands never left him.

29 THE AMBIVALENCE OF BERTHA BUSCH

'I gave Maria dinner the other night,' wrote Brother Volo Intelligere in London to the Beast in Berlin,

and found her in a very bad way. Rent is paid up to the end of the month, but she is very short of food, and in a bad nervous condition, talking to everyone of suicide. Her genuine attempts to find work have met with very little success. She got one regular job, but lost it through being your wife when John Bull attacked you and the Mandrake Press early in January . . .

But why, one might ask, had she taken up with Aleister Crowley in the first place? He had all, or most, of the qualities to put a woman off: he was no longer young; he was in ill shape and ill health generally; his reputation for infidelity was notorious; with his drugged stare and fumes of ether, which announced his presence, he looked like the Wanderer of the Waste. He was obviously incapable of love as the word is generally understood. The only clue to Maria Teresa's character is provided by an account¹ of a magical ritual which she, Volo Intelligere, and the Serpent performed during the early part of 1929 in Crowley's apartment in Paris.

Crowley was not present. The Serpent and Volo Intelligere had been stimulated by Maria's remark that in her youth she had danced to the devil round a bonfire.

They put on their magical robes, cleared the furniture out of the way, stirred up the coal fire, drew a magic circle on the floor, lit the Abra-Melin incense, turned out the light. They began with the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram (see page 235); then the Serpent and V.I. seated themselves in an easy yoga posture and, following the magick of the Beast, began to chant the verses from the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu. Maria, whom Brother V.I. described as big and cumbersome, began to dance. She approached the fire and made passes with hands and bare feet over and amid the flames. The room was cloudy with incense and coal smoke. Suddenly, while the Serpent and V.I. were still chanting the Egyptian mantra, Maria let forth a cry and fell senseless to the floor. V.I.

1 By Volo Intelligere.

had felt a presence behind his right shoulder, a form or force outside the circle. This was confirmed by the Serpent; he, too, had sensed the being whom their ceremonial magic had evoked, and he indicated the spot exactly.

Marie Teresa said good-bye to the man she thought was her husband. Now she was interested only in getting what she called vaguely a settlement, being under the impression that Crowley had money and could be persuaded to give her some of it. Apart from windfalls from Rich Men and Rich Women, and some poor men and women like his devoted friend Gilbert Bayley (who put himself into the hands of moneylenders in response to a *very urgent* appeal from the Beast), Crowley had an income of a few pounds a week; for the trustees of the small discretionary trust (see note on page 150) were now dividing the interest from the trust between him and his daughter, Lola Zaza.

The Beast felt he should do something; Maria was a nuisance and a drag. He must divorce her without, of course, running any risk of having to pay her alimony. He composed this memorandum for his solicitors in London.

June 16, 1930 e.v. to August 1, I was living at 89 Park Mansions Knightsbridge, with my wife. I had continual cause of complaint against her.

(1) She refused to make any efforts to learn English.

(2) She was constantly drunk in public – often violently, to the point of vomiting or collapse.

(3) She was always making violent scenes, among friends or at parties.

(4) She used to make love to male guests – embracing, kissing &c. – in public.

August 1. I left for Berlin on important business.

August 3. Wrote my wife full instructions how to carry on. I also voiced the above complaints, and intimated that I would not resume normal cohabitation unless these grievances were redressed.

To this letter I received no answer, except an entirely frivolous and irrelevant communication mailed after I had left Berlin on August 13 and returned to London.

August 24. In London. No news of my wife, except vague rumours that she asked for me in a restaurant where I occasionally eat, that she was living with some man in a flat in Hampstead, &c.

August 29. Still no news. I am obliged to leave London on a business trip to Lisbon.

Brother V.I. wrote to say that Maria had disappeared from her Hampstead lodgings and that her last letter to him pointed to suicide. 'Alas everything is cruel to me. When you get this letter, I am died. I leave this world without regret, because I know that now I go for ever take a dear rest. Please write after to Crowley that in my last moment I could not forgive him. Farewell.'

The Beast shuffled the Yi King sticks. Where is Maria? Is she dead? If not, what had happened to her? Hexagram XX. Kwan. The worshipper has washed his hands, but not yet presented his

offerings.

She may have run off with a man was Crowley's interpretation; or be dead. The former seemed more likely to him.

He was anxious to be divorced from Maria, for he wanted to marry the Monster; or, if not the Monster, some other Scarlet-Woman type, of whom he had always dreamed, who would solve for once and for ever all his problems. Many times recently he had asked the Chinese Oracle whether he should 'seek to establish a permanent fortune by marrying a rich woman'. On the last occasion that he had summoned up the Spirit that Knows Everything to pose this question it had smilingly replied, 'The bold, bad woman!'

The Monster was also anxious about the Beast's divorce, for she was now pregnant. She wrote to the Serpent for advice. The Serpent was Crowley's pupil in matters magical but Crowley was his in matters practical. 'Monster's note about it being much better for the Great Work if you were plaintiff is perfectly true,' he wrote to Crowley.

It is too bad that that wasn't thought of several months ago when Maria received your letter stating that you had committed adultery umpteen times and that only the rigours of travelling prevented the number being greater. The letter must have caused you a great deal of pleasure when written, but, alas, it prevents you even thinking of being a plaintiff for divorce now. One can't have it both ways.

But the question whether or not he should or could be divorced from Maria, with or without payment of alimony, was suddenly taken to another plane by Maria's being committed to a mental hospital with the delusion that she was – I quote from the memo-

randum from the Medical Superintendent – 'the daughter of the King and Queen and that she had married her brother, the Prince of Wales'.

'Hear Maria is in Colney Hatch,' wrote Crowley in his diary. He was reminded that the departure of his first wife, Rose, to the 'Bug House' was the signal for the appearance of a new Scarlet Woman, Virakam. Was, therefore, another mistress and companion, whom he could instruct in the High Magick Art, about to come into his life? After many upsets, the Monster had left him. 'Hanni left finally, stealing my *Book of Lies*. I am glad I can brand her everywhere openly as a thief.'

He filled in the questionnaire about Maria Teresa Crowley which the authorities of the mental hospital at Colney Hatch had sent him, and commented, 'It is very English to regard insanity as a joke.' Then he cleared out of the way all odd mistresses and lovers for the stately emergence of a new Scarlet Women.

This was Bertha Busch whom he called Bill or Billy. She was thirty-six years of age, and had been married at least once. What she had been doing until the influence of the stars brought her face to face with Aleister Crowley, I do not know.

They met in this fashion; he was walking down the Unter den Linden when their glance met. The Beast stopped to look into the window of a nearby travel agency. She came up and spoke to him.

'The words used were not "Why do you look so sad, Bertie?" but "Where are you going for your next trip?"'

It was 3.00 pm on 3 August 1931, before the love affair with a woman called Pola had had time to grow cold.

While he was ill with an attack of bronchitic asthma, she came and comforted him, and on one occasion stayed the night – the very night the hotel was raided by the police who suspected that there was a young brothel behind the façade.

Their attraction for each other was tremendous. He wrote of her sexual powers and charms in words of excessive praise.

He said he loved her passionately and truly but felt he must avoid her lest 'she might return my love'.

She did return his love; she had lived unhappy and unfulfilled, we can well believe, until the day her Darling Boy, as she called the Beast, gazed upon her and asked her to be his Scarlet Woman.

Although he went to bed and dreamed that he had murdered 'three of his children', the thought of Bill was enough to fill him with mysterious health. He pawned his jewellery to give her

money, and consecrated her as his Whore, the Scarlet Woman of the Beast 666, with an act of magical sex before the undiminished presence of Aiwass.

Then he found a flat and went to live with her in it.

She was the cause of much irritation between Crowley and Brother Saturnus who refused to bow down and worship her, for he contested her right to the high position of Scarlet Woman, the companion and equal of the Beast. But Crowley was indifferent to the complaints of Brother Saturnus, and lost himself in a vortex of passion, the blood from his lips, held by Bill's teeth in a furious embrace, flowing over her face. If Crowley loved Bill, his love was ambivalent – Bleuler's term for love and hate mingling in the one stream. In fact, between periods of love and worship, Bill was much abused by the Beast and all hope of a permanent union was soon destroyed.

Monday, November 2nd, 1931. Called on Max Brunnig, a sort of inferior Dix or Rops, with a studio imitating well enough an Oriental junkshop. He gave us lots of bad cognac. We went crazy. Instantly we got home I got down on S[carlet] W[oman]. She pissed gallons – we tore off our clothes; fucked & fucked & fucked. And suddenly she got a jealous fit about 3 cheap whores at Brunnig's & I strangled her.

Tuesday, 3. Woke early & finished the fuck.

They quarrelled in the street. On one occasion, Crowley held her against the wall with one hand and beat her with the other; unfortunately for him some passing storm-troopers came to the rescue of Bill and trod Crowley's face into the gutter.

Of course, these upsets produced fits of aggression in the Scarlet Woman. Women, whether Scarlet or any other colour, are what men make of them. 'Bill went to kitchen, I to study. Suddenly she walked in on me and stabbed me with the carving knife. She then became violent. I had to hold her down. So bled till Marie [the landlady] got a doctor, about two hours later.'

The doctor gave Bill an injection of morphine to steady her nerves; then stitched up and bandaged the Beast.

'Tuesday, 15th December. Hamilton to dinner. Totally incredulous when told of the stabbing, and made quite ill when he pictured the blood.'

This was Gerald Hamilton, the companion of Sir Roger Casement and the only man to spend part of both world wars in Brixton Gaol for political reasons; later he was Crowley's lodger.

'The Beast,' Hamilton said to me drily, 'was supported by involuntary contributions from his friends.'

Although Crowley was always indignantly complaining of Bill's making a nuisance of herself, his life with her was not all antagonism. They enjoyed apparently their social life together. He introduced her to his friends – his Scarlet Woman who rode upon him triumphant. She met the novelist, Christopher Isherwood, and the poet, Stephen Spender, who were then in Berlin.

'My sweetheart is killing me. After lunch she seduced me with her marvellous mouth, and I had to make love to her. I screamed for ten minutes,' is another entry in his diary at this time.

One night, Hamilton came back late to the flat, and found Bill lying stark naked on the floor. It was winter and the fire had burnt out. He shook the dozing Beast and asked, 'Is Billy ill?'

'What, hasn't that bitch gone to bed yet?'

Crowley tumbled off the divan (he was half dressed and still had his shoes on) and gave her the biggest kick that Hamilton had ever seen.

The flat was strewn with broken crockery, plate-throwing being one of Bill's means of defence. Bill sprang up and a struggle commenced. Crowley reached out for some rope which was kept handy.

'Help me bind her!' he roared at Gerald. 'Don't stand there looking like a bloody gentleman!'

Gerald tactfully retreated towards the door, ignoring cries for help from them both. Then, judiciously, he called the doctor, who soon arrived, prepared his hypodermic syringe, and administered a much-needed narcotic to poor Bill.

One early afternoon, Gerald came back to the flat and found Bill drugged and trussed up like a chicken; there was a note beside her in the Beast's writing, saying that she was not to be untied in any circumstances.

At that time Gerald was a communist sympathiser as well as being a 'revolutionary' in Irish politics, that is to say anti-British; this was rather convenient for Crowley because it enabled him to meet Thaelmann and other communist leaders (to urge them to drop the class struggle and take up the law of Thelema which would solve everything) and to earn £50 by secretly reporting on Gerald's activities to the British authorities.

He made another attempt to get into the news again by sending a cablegram, in Billy's name, to Wilfred Hanchant, whom Maria Teresa (according to Crowley) had tried in vain to seduce. 'Master Therion dead. Please inform press.' But Hanchant cabled back, 'There are two of them. Both bounce.'

Bertha Busch went the way of all Scarlet Women of the Beast. Her letters to him, written in a large hand not unlike that of Dorothy Olsen, are full of tenderness, explanations, and despair. She followed him to England where she slowly faded out in a series of diminishing uproars

30 MR JUSTICE SWIFT IS SURPRISED

It had been a matter of regret to Crowley that he never sued the Sunday Express for libel, and, through a successful lawsuit, rehabilitated his character and repaired his fortune, as Frank Harris had so optimistically outlined. It does not seem to have occurred to Crowley that in suing Lord Beaverbrook, he might be biting off more than he could chew. It was true that John Bull had abused him with equal violence ('A Man We'd Like to Hang', 'A Cannibal at Large', and 'The King of Depravity' were some of their headlines about the Beast), but the onslaughts of the Sunday Express had created a far greater impact and they had been, as far as Crowley was aware, the direct cause of his expulsion from Sicily and the ruin of all his work. Mudd's pamphlet had remedied nothing: no one seemed to have taken any notice of it. Unfortunately he had lacked the money and the health to sue Lord Beaverbrook within a reasonable time after these melancholy events.

On 7 January 1933, Crowley was walking down Praed Street in London. He stopped to look into the window of a bookshop and there saw a copy of his novel, *Moonchild*. Attached to it was a card with these words: 'Aleister Crowley's first novel *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* was withdrawn from circulation after an attack in the sensational press.'

'Discovered libel at 23 Praed Street,' wrote the Beast in his diary, and went off to his lawyer.

On 10 May, the case was tried and judgement was given to Crowley. 'There was not the smallest ground,' said Mr Justice Bennett, 'for suggesting that any book Mr Crowley had written was indecent or improper. Mr Gray [the bookseller] wanted the public to believe that the book to which the label was attached was an indecent book.'

Crowley was awarded £50 damages with costs.

In August 1933, he met Pearl Brooksmith, thirty-five years old, of modest means. He asked the *Yi King* for a general symbol for her, and was given a reply which he interpreted as meaning that she needed the Great Man. A few days later, their first act of sexual magic took place, described in his diary, in Latin, as 'in the hand of the lady'. The following month, he recorded a remark of

hers: 'Pearl's perfect magical phrase, "I feel the flame of fornication creeping up my body."'

The success of his first libel suit whetted his appetite for further jousts in the law courts. He remembered that Nina Hamnett had published something about him in her reminiscences, *Laughing Torso*, which had appeared in 1932.

'I have written quite a lot about you,' wrote Nina Hamnett to the Beast in 1930, 'very nice and appreciative. No libel, no rubbish, simply showing up the "sale bourgeois" attitude to all our behaviour.'

Crowley opened *Laughing Torso* and read that he had had a temple in Cefalu. 'He was supposed to practise Black Magic there, and one day a baby was said to have disappeared mysteriously. There was also a goat there. This all pointed to Black Magic, so people said, and the inhabitants of the village were frightened of him.'

Crowley reached for his hat and went to his lawyer.

The Beast's decision to sue his old friend Nina Hamnett (they had known each other for over twenty years) created one of the most extraordinary trials of the 20th century. Opposing Crowley this time was not a small bookseller but a big publishing house, Constable and Company, who briefed Malcolm Hilbery, K.C. to defend them.

Crowley's lawyer asked the Beast to find among his friends two persons who would testify to his good character, but no one, except the faithful, was willing to step into court and swear that 'the Wickedest Man in the World' was, in fact, only a harmless, ageing gentleman, unfortunately enveloped in a cloud of evil gossip.

'Mr Crowley is mistaken,' wrote J. W. N. Sullivan to Crowley's lawyer. 'I have no intention whatever of appearing as a witness in the case you mention.' Sullivan had long since divested himself of the Beast's influence.

The refusal of J. F. C. Fuller, now a Major-General and much decorated, was even more emphatic.

The novelist, J. D. Beresford, who had commissioned *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* for William Collins, wrote a kindly refusal and tried to persuade Crowley to drop this lawsuit. 'I haven't the least doubt that some very extraordinary and damaging charges will be made against you if you come into court, the kind of charges that would spoil any chance you might have with a judge, who is a kind of professional moralist.'

Crowley fell back on Brother Saturnus who naturally agreed to give evidence on his behalf.

Crowley's lawyer, probing the weak spots in his client's case, asked the Beast for a copy of *White Stains*. After reading it, he wrote to him, 'I have no hesitation in saying that if the Defendants are in possession of that book your chances of winning this action are negligible. I can see no satisfactory explanation of it.'

Other points he raised were in connection with the Abbey. Did not the Thelemites walk about naked and shock the Sicilians? Crowley replied:

I have just remembered an incident which is probably the basis of the statements about exhibiting ourselves naked to the inhabitants of Sicily. I expelled a man named Russell for misbehaviour, and he went up to live on the top of the Rock under a vow not to touch water for a week. Very naturally he went mad, and did all sorts of stunts and absurdities of which this may have been one.

The case was opened on 10 April 1934, in the King's Bench Division of the High Court, before Mr Justice Swift and a special jury. The defence was a plea of justification.

Crowley's counsel, J. P. Eddy, began with a brief account of Crowley's life: he had inherited a fortune, was devoted to poetry, art, travel, and mountaineering. He had climbed in the Alps and walked across the Sahara. For many years, he had been interested in magic, and had always fought against black magic. In 1920, he had started a little community at a villa in Cefalu for the purpose of studying white magic. Eddy then quoted the passage in Nina Hamnett's book about the baby that disappeared and about the goat. And Crowley, in the witness box, denied the suggestion that he had told these things to Miss Hamnett.

Hilbery then cross-examined Crowley for the Defence.

'Are you,' he asked, 'asking for damages because your reputation has suffered?'

'Yes,' replied Crowley.

'For many years you have been publicly denounced as the worst man in the world?'

'Only by the lowest kind of newspaper.'

'Did any paper call you "the Monster of Wickedness"?"

'I can't remember.'

'Have you, from the time of your adolescence, openly defied all moral conventions?'

'No.'

'And proclaimed your contempt for all the doctrines of Christianity?'

'Not all the doctrines . . .'

'Did you take to yourself the designation of "The Beast 666"?' 'Yes.'

'Do you call yourself "the Master Therion"?"

'Yes.'

'What does "Therion" mean?'

"Great Wild Beast."

'Do these titles convey a fair expression of your practice and outlook on life?'

"The Beast 666" only means "sunlight". You can call me "Little Sunshine".'

Laughter in court.

During the second day's hearing, Hilbery read out a poem from the erotic *Clouds Without Water* and, at its conclusion, asked the Beast, 'Is that not filth?'

'As you read it, it is magnificent,' replied Crowley, inverting Wilde's reply to Carson.

White Stains, which had shaken Crowley's lawyer, was also produced in court and examined by the judge, who asked the jury if they wanted to read it, but 'they intimated that they did not'.

As Beresford had predicted, many unfavourable aspects of Crowley's past activities were brought up; and the trial of Nina Hamnett and Constable and Company for publishing a libel soon turned into the trial of Aleister Crowley for leading an immoral life. On the third day the Defence put Betty May into the box and she described many lurid scenes that she had witnessed at the Abbey. When asked about the paintings upon the walls of Crowley's room, La Chambre des Cauchemars, she replied. 'They were terrible'.

'Do you mean they were indecent?' asked the judge.

'Most.'

On the fourth day of the case, the judge, unable to contain himself any longer, said to the jury:

I have been over forty years engaged in the administration of the law in one capacity or another. I thought that I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness. I thought that everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me. I have learnt in this case that we can learn always something more if we live long enough. I have never heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous and abominable stuff as that which has been produced by the man who describes himself to you as the greatest living poet. Are you still of the same mind or do you want the case to go on?

While the jury were consulting, Crowley's counsel rose but the judge forestalled him. 'Not now, Mr Eddy, not now.'

'Could the jury retire?' asked the foreman.

'No,' said the judge. 'If there is any doubt the case must go on.'
The jury consulted again and speedily returned a verdict for the defendants.

Thus the case ended. Crowley made no dramatic speeches; there was no Forth-Speaking of the Word of the Lord, as he had outlined in 1924 in his letter to Frank Harris, only the forth-speaking of the mind of Mr Justice Swift.

As Crowley strode from the court a girl of nineteen, who had been following the case, ran after him. With tears in her eyes she accosted the Beast on the broad pavement outside the law courts. 'This verdict,' she said, 'is the wickedest thing since the Crucifixion. Is there anything I can do to help?'

Crowley stared down at her, filled with too much emotion to find words.

'Couldn't I,' continued the stranger, 'be the mother of your child?' She had already two illegitimate children, so she knew what she was letting herself in for.

Crowley's comment on the case (in his diary) is rather cryptic. He underlined and put an exclamation after 'Friday, April 13' (the day of the verdict), and wrote, 'Case violated by collapse of Swift and Nina. General joy – the consternation of Constable & Co.'

The following day, he went with Pearl to Brighton. She had succeeded Bill as the Whore of the Stars after the Beast had tried, and rejected, a number of other women who were aspiring to the vacant office. Strangely, his defeat in the courts left him only with a feeling of elation. He had lost, but newspaper-sellers had shouted out his name in the streets of London and elsewhere. The world had stopped and stared and wondered at his words and photographs. In his failure was his success.

Crowley's lawsuit not only reminded the world that he still existed, and introduced him to millions who had never before heard of him, but aroused his creditors to drag him into the

Bankruptcy Court. His liabilities from thirty-eight Unsecured and ten Partly Secured creditors came to £4,695 8s. 1d. and his assets to £15,000. Unfortunately these assets were not very tangible. They were to come from Brother Volo Intelligere, upon whom Crowley had recently served a writ for the payment of £15,000 on the grounds that he would have made this sum had not Volo Intelligere been his business manager. The deficiency was therefore £4,695 8s. 1d. Of the Unsecured Liabilities £846 was for the defendants' costs in the libel action, £814 for clothing and books, £265 for wines and tobacco, and so on. The summary of this statement concludes with 'The bankrupt states that he is not now possessed of household furniture.'

Crowley had, indeed, no household furniture – Alastor, the Wanderer of the Waste would only have been encumbered with household furniture. He had refrained from mentioning that he owned £150,000 or so in the form of property at San José, California, for that, alas, was as nebulous as the £15,000 which he was demanding from Brother V.I.

He had arrived at the ownership of this estate in California through the activity of one R. Swinburne Clymer, the head of an American Rosicrucian society called the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. Clymer (whom the present writer met in 1948) was the author of an enormous book which he had written in an attempt to discredit a certain H. Spencer Lewis, the Imperator of a rival Rosicrucian order called the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (or AMORC for short). The basis of Clymer's attack on Lewis, 'the boastful, pilfering Imperator with black magic connections', was that Lewis had received a charter for his Order. which Clymer described as a commercial enterprise, from the O.T.O. While on the subject of R. Swinburne Clymer's two volumes, The Rosicrucian Fraternity in America: Authentic and Spurious Organizations, I should like to say that, in my view, his thesis on Lewis and Crowley is largely baseless, for the late Imperator of AMORC received his charter, not from Crowley but from Theodor Reuss; and as far as I know, Crowley's only connection with Lewis was to write to ask him to surrender his estates at San José, the headquarters of AMORC, to him. Lewis's reply to Crowley is not recorded.

Three months later, Crowley found himself again in the courts, this time in the dock at the Old Bailey. The nightmare had turned to reality, but the charge was not that of attempting to overthrow

Christianity and the moral order of society and set up a new moral order based on principles taken from Rabelais, nor was it for general unfaithfulness to men and women to whom he had been bound by oaths of love and obedience, but merely that of having received four original letters and one copy of a letter, said to have been stolen from Betty May.

He described himself as an explorer and an author, and pleaded

not guilty.

The theft seems to have been committed by a certain Captain Eddie Cruze who lived in the same house as Betty, but Cruze was never accused of, let alone put on trial for, this offence. Crowley had given Cruze £5 for the letters; he had wanted them as evidence in his case against Constable and Nina Hamnett; and at that trial, they had been produced in court, rather to Crowley's disadvantage at the time; and nothing more would have been heard of this matter had it not been for Charles Gray, who was still seeking revenge on Crowley for the death of Raoul Loveday. 'I am not at all ashamed of my share in this "persecution",' he wrote to me.

The trial lasted two days; the jury found Crowley guilty.

Mr Justice Whiteley commented that the letters ought never to have been used or to have been in the defendant's possession; he would not, however, send him to prison because no harm had been done.

'Thank you, my Lord,' said Crowley.

'If anything of this kind occurs again you'll be brought here and receive six months. You understand that?'

'I do, my Lord.'

He was bound over for two years and ordered to pay 50 guineas towards the cost of the prosecution.

'Idiots said "guilty". Judge bound me over,' wrote Crowley in his diary. He added, 'violent attack of asthma just as I got into the box! Hell – it stopped my spilling the beans properly.' It was just as well that he did not.

Charles Gray said that Crowley cut a pitiable figure in the dock. 'He had a top hat for his trial: surely he and Lord Kylsant¹ were the two last men ever to wear top hats in the dock at the Old Bailey?'

¹ Kylsant, a shipping magnate, was on trial during September 1931 for issuing a misleading prospectus: he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

31 MAGICAL RETIREMENT

What now was left for Aleister Crowley to do? As the Logos of the Aeon or Ra-Hoor-Khuit or, as he otherwise expressed it, 'the sublimest mystic of all history . . . the self-crowned God whom men shall worship and blaspheme for centuries', he could hardly have achieved more.¹

If, however, Crowley considered himself not as a god but as a man, he was far from satisfied: he was growing old and he had failed to achieve most of his ambitions. Three of his poems had been published in *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, 1917, but he was not honoured as a poet. His exploits as a mountaineer were passed over or only mentioned, as in Frank Smythe's book on Kangchenjunga, with barely concealed hostility. His magical achievements, in this age of science, materialism, and disbelief, were regarded with amusement, curiosity, and incredulity. He was for the public only the Wickedest Man in the World, that is to say a kind of joke or, at best, a person not quite nice to know.

But whether Crowley regarded himself in one aspect or the other, as Baphomet, the Most Holy King of the whole earth, or as Aleister Crowley, the King of Depravity, he was always the Spirit of Solitude, Alastor the Destroyer, the Wanderer of the Waste. There was no respite; he was for ever driven darkly onwards.

He had written his books, sacred and profane, and given out his word, *thelema*, to mankind; but unlike other men of his age who had done the things they had wanted to do, he could not lean back and enjoy his last years. There was no sense of fulfilment, of having lived his life. In addition, he was almost continuously ill.

But meanwhile the business of living – of finding somewhere comfortable to live and something exotic to eat and someone

1 The delusion of grandeur is always a compensation; underneath is inferiority, the sense of worthlessness. In the same paragraph in which Crowley proclaimed his godhead, he disclosed the purpose of it all: '... because I want to prostitute my manhood, to abase my Godhead, before my lady. I want my crown crushed by Her feet; I want my face fouled by Her spittle. I want my heart torn by Her boot-heel, my mind to be Her skirt-hem's rustle, my soul to be Her privy.'

Apocalyptic to love – had to go on. And there were the affairs of his Order to attend to; the O.T.O. had still a little life in it. At the turn of the century, magic had flourished in a quiet way in the Golden Dawn; it would flourish again. Crowley's main work in the last ten years of his life was to hold the O.T.O. together and write, write, write as the Wandering Jew walks, walks, walks.

He wandered about Chelsea and Piccadilly, lifting his hat to embracing couples and raising a deprecating hand at all clergymen and pronouncing ἀπό παντός κακοδαίμονος '[And save us] from every evil demon' - a phrase from the liturgy of the Greek Orthodox Church. New pupils and lovers came and vanished in moderately quick succession. The Scarlet Woman last mentioned, after many uproars and hallucinations1 was removed to a mental hospital, from which place she wrote pitiful letters to the Beast begging him to come to rescue her; for the Devil, who kept looking out from under her bed, was threatening to carry her off. He heard that Hanni Jaeger had committed suicide soon after they had parted, and Dorothy Olsen, not long before, had resolutely drunk herself to death. According to Brother Aossic (Kenneth Grant), he chose these border-line women because of 'their aptitude for getting out on to the Astral Plane more easily than the average, better integrated person'.

On Sunday 28 February 1937, his famous Serpent's Kiss tooth, left upper, which had drawn the blood of not a few women, broke off in a Turkish bath – 'Alas!' A child was born to him by the young woman who had accosted him after his unsuccessful suit before Mr Justice Swift.

Like other men of renown, he received letters from strangers.

Dear Sir, I am writing to you because I am sure you can help me; my story is as follows. When I was three weeks old I met with a shock which has tremendously affected my life. I was lying in my cradle when a hard bowler hat fell off a hat rack and hit me on the temple and rendered me unconscious. The effect of it was that it upset my whole nervous system. Since I can remember I have suffered from excessive perspiration of the hands and feet, extreme nervousness and extreme shyness, and when I reached about the age of fourteen I began to suffer from excessive seminal losses, both day and night. I am now thirty-

^{1 &#}x27;Pearl started her Macbeth act. Had to throw her out. She fought like a tiger-cat. Hell to pay in house' is a typical entry about this lady in the Beast's diary.

four years of age, but I do not look it. The ailments I suffer from are a tremendous handicap to me. I am overwhelmingly ambitious and possess tremendous will power, and it was because of this fact that I became a member of the Rosicrucian Order of N. America in 1928 when I was living in New York. Owing, however, to my weak nervous condition I was unable to bear the strain of the exercises and after two or three weeks I had to give them up. I have very great ideals and have a strong desire to do good in the world, for instance, putting an end to the White Slave Traffic, stopping any future war, and it is for this reason I would like to develop my psychic power but I cannot do so until I am cured of my nervous condition. Now, Sir, as you are a magician...

Another letter was sent from Wormwood Scrubs:

Dear Sir, since my last letter to you of about 20th November last, I have been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for robbery. This (my first conviction) has been due to following in the past a false will and I intend to dedicate the fruits of my misguidedness to a strong effort to find my true will. In order to do this, I urgently require a copy of Magick in Theory and Practice and I would consider it a great favour if you could arrange to have one sent to me here . . . I should mention that the rules of the prison make all books sent in the property of the prison library and on my discharge Magick will be put into circulation (where it will remain constantly), and will, I assure you, find readers – even unwilling ones, for the famine of reading matter is not the least of one's worries here.

During creative moods, Crowley thought out many schemes for making money and bringing himself again before the public. His Black Magick Restaurant, in spite of his ability to concoct the more exotic dishes, such as 'Mexican meat dish, so hot that it makes strong men weep', was never established; and nothing came of his design to exploit a game he had invented called 'Thelema'.

His Elixir of Life pills, which were made in part of his own semen, were a little more successful. 'Dear Mr Crowley, the smallest possible dose of your Elixir of Life would be appreciated by me,' wrote one young woman. 'I can give you any references you may require and assure you that the desire has nothing whatever to do with sexual difficulties. It is to try and help me pay back about £300 which I have incurred trying to become a first-class

tennis player. I have not at the moment sufficient stamina to compete as I wish . . .'

The 'elixir', generally speaking, was Crowley's equivalent to the host of the Christian Eucharist; that is to say, he vitalised by the power of his will his own 'sacramental' substances and consumed them. It was the concluding part of the rite of sexual magick. In the case of Elixir of Life pills he would vitalise the elixir for perpetual youth.

His most successful scheme of all was his course of bodily and sexual rejuvenation called Amrita (25 guineas weekly). Amrita is the ambrosia of the gods; it is another name for the Elixir of Life.

Case 28. Married woman, 42, obese and idle. Bitterly aware of failure to attract. Came to me in 1932. A good patient, despite some lapses. Gave Amrita after four and a half months. She responded admirably. She is still, six years later, sprightly, emergetic, and devastating. Would not look more than 35 but makes up badly.

Case 73. Army officer, 54, long service, mostly in India. Had been impotent for over 15 years. Sports – polo and stalking in Kashmir. Old malarial subject – liver affected. I insisted on change of climate before taking the case. His health improved greatly. He proved a difficult patient, and needed the full six months' course. Four doses were administered in the 7th month Potency returned after the first dose, but not satisfactorily. After the fourth, he was like an exceptionally strong man of 40. Unfortunately he abused his powers, got into the clutches of a loose woman, and took to drinking heavily.

Every day, and sometimes several times during the day, Crowley consulted the *Yi King*. As soon as he was awake, he laid out the sticks to divine what was in store for him during the next few hours. His devotion to this voice of wisdom, like his belief in the voice that had dictated *The Book of the Law*, removes him a little from the indignity of his sordid affairs with women. This was an aspect of Crowley which drew his pupils to him – a man submissive to, and in touch with, his unconscious.

In 1935, the Nazis banned the A.A., the O.T.O., and other occult orders. Brother Saturnus, who was a 33° mason, and who had helped to establish the Thelema Publishing Company in Leipzig – it had produced several of Crowley's works in German translation – was arrested and cast into a concentration camp. All Martha Küntzel's papers were seized to her dismay, for she

loved Hitler as much as she did Crowley. To her mind, the two leaders, one of a nation, the other of a mystic order, were working to the same end, that of establishing a new world order based on the true will. In 1925, Crowley had told her that the nation which first adopted The Book of the Law would become the leading nation of the world. It seemed to her that the then not-veryimportant Adolf Hitler was Germany's coming man, so she sent him a copy of her translation of Liber Legis. In her eyes, the Master Therion was the prophet of National Socialism, for the Law of Thelema supplied its philosophical base. Hitler was a Thelemite, leading the German people to express through him their (demonic) wills. This is the basis of Martha Küntzel's claim that Hitler was her Magical Son; but it is unlikely that she was ever in touch with Hitler; and in any case Hitler did not need Crowley as a master or any hints from his Do-what-thou-wilt philosophy.

Crowley maintained with Martha Küntzel a regular correspondence on thelemic matters after he had left Germany; it came to an end in 1939 when Martha's admiration for Hitler became too much even for Crowley. In his last letter to her, just before the outbreak of war, he suddenly revealed himself as a patriot, and told Sister I.W.E. that Britain would 'knock Hitler for a six'. She did not reply.

After ten months in Esterwegan concentration camp, Brother Saturnus was set free; he had been sustained during his ordeal by his Holy Guardian Angel. He went to Belgium, from which place he continued to send his master, the Beast, gifts of money and in return received advice and instruction into many mystical matters relating to the higher and more complex paths of their Order. In 1940, because of his German nationality, he was arrested by the Belgium authorities and deported to France, He spent ten months in a French concentration camp; in 1941, he was released and emigrated to the United States.

In 1937, Crowley published *The Equinox of the Gods*, a work containing the full text of *Liber Legis* and a brief history of his magical career, or ascent to the thrones of the Secret Chiefs. Both sides of the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu are reproduced in colour and facsimile sheets of the original manuscript of *Liber Legis* are contained in a folder at the back. Apart from a few careless misprints, such as the description of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu's stele as 'the

1 See *Manifesto*, 1963, published by the Swiss branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis.

Stele of Revelling' instead of 'the Stele of Revealing', it is a splendid production, embossed and bound in buckram. On the evening of Christmas Day, Crowley, with Brother Volo Intelligere, in the course of an intinerary to several public houses, gathered a Jew, an Indian, a Negro, and a Malayan. They all proceeded to Cleopatra's Needle on the London Embankment, where, at precisely 6.22 am of Boxing Day, as the Sun entered Capricornus, the Beast pronounced, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I, Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, the Priest of the Princes, present you, as representatives of your race, with *The Book of the Law*. It is the charter of universal freedom for every man and woman in the world. Love is the law, love under will.' He then handed round copies of *The Equinox of the Gods* and went home to bed with a hangover.

The more serious interest in magick was now coming from America where a thelemic lodge, called Agape Lodge, had been established at Pasadena, California. This was the so-called Church of Thelema in California, in the temple of which an exact copy, painted on wood, of the Stele of Revealing (the pantacle of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu), tall candles, and the usual collection of magical weapons were set out on an altar. The church was under the leadership of Wilfred T. Smith (Frater 132) whom Crowley had met in Vancouver during 1915. Frater 132 seems to have modelled himself a little too closely on Crowley, to Crowley's disgust, for he seduced Helen, the wife of Dr John (or Jack) Whiteside Parsons (Frater 210), one of the faithful, and brought down Crowley's wrath on his head. He was giving the Order, Crowley told him, 'the reputation of being that slimy abomination, a "love cult". Already in 1915 in Vancouver, all I knew of you was that you were running a mother and her daughter in double harness - since then one scandal has followed another.'

Crowley expelled Frater 132 from the Order.

In 1942, Parsons took over the leadership of Agape Lodge; he had been consoled for the loss of his wife, Helen (who, meanwhile, had had a child by Frater 132) by her young sister, Betty. Parsons at this time was about twenty-five years of age, a brilliant, solid-fuel rocket expert.

They were so devoted to the creed of magick, these Thelemites at Pasadena, that they performed every day in their temple Crowley's Gnostic Mass (Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae)

1 Brother Volo Intelligere was by now no longer a member of the A:A: but he was still Crowley's friend.

which takes at least forty minutes, and which requires a priest, priestess, deacon, virgin, two children, and chorus ('the people').

Brother Saturnus in New York was the Outer Head of the Order for America; he collected the dues from Agape Lodge and sent them to Crowlev in England.

In the spring of 1945, Parsons met a new aspirant to the Great Work, a young man called Ron Hubbard. Hubbard's magical potential was great and he made a considerable impression upon the members of Agape Lodge, especially on Betty, the mistress of Dr Parsons; she soon found herself sleeping with him.

Frater 210 (Dr Parsons) was not unduly upset about this; for he had decided to follow even more closely in the Beast's footsteps and find, by magical means, a Scarlet Woman, his own true Whore of the Stars. He proposed, in other words, to attract an elemental or familiar spirit.

About three months ago I met Ron Hubbard ... [Parsons wrote in July 1945 to Crowley whom he addressed as 'Most Beloved Father'] he is a writer and explorer . . . a gentleman: he has red hair, green eyes, is honest and intelligent, and we have become great friends. He moved in with me about two months ago, and although Betty and I are still friendly, she has transferred her sexual affection to Ron. I cared for her rather deeply but I have no desire to control her emotions. Although Ron has no formal training in Magick, he has an extraordinary amount of experience and understanding in the field. From some of his experiences I deduced that he is in direct touch with some higher intelligence, possibly his Guardian Angel. He describes his Angel as a beautiful winged woman with red hair whom he calls the Empress . . . He is the most Thelemic person I have ever met and is in complete accord with our own principles. He is also interested in establishing the New Aeon. Thy son, John,

How to attract an elemental (which one can turn into one's familiar spirit) is set forth in the top secret O.T.O. treatise entitled, *De Nuptiis Secretis Deorum cum Hominibus*,¹ a treatise rewritten by Crowley who added of course his own characteristic touches.

Frater 210 set to work. He wrote to Crowley that he had followed the VIII° instruction carefully, with a talisman consecrated in the proper manner, the rite ending with the command to the spirit in question to appear visibly before him.

1 'Concerning the Secret Marriages of the Gods with Men.'

For this class of magic (VIII°), one needs no assistant for it is sexual magic of the solitary kind; but Parsons chose nevertheless to perform the rite in the presence of Ron Hubbard. He was wearing a black hooded robe, and Hubbard a white one. Thundering away in the background was one of Prokofief's piano concertos or Rakhmaninof's symphonic poem, *Island of the Dead*.

The ritual must have been one of Parson's or Hubbard's own making, for it went on for about eleven consecutive nights. Hubbard, it seems, partly instructed Parsons. The magical drivel which Parsons was screaming for most of the time (if not the puerility of his verses to Babalon, the Scarlet Woman) would have offended Crowley's sense of magical propriety. Another letter to Crowley contained a further account of the operation. 'For the last three days I have performed an operation of birth, using the air tablet, the cup, and a female figure, properly invoked by the wand, then sealed up in the altar. Last night I performed an operation of symbolic birth and delivery.'

The Air Tablet or Elemental Tablet of Enoch is one of the four Watch Towers of the Universe, the others being tablets of Fire, Earth and Water. In other words Parsons was working the magical system of John Dee and his scryer, Edward Kelley, which Crowley had successfully worked during 1909 in the North African desert with his chela, Victor Neuburg. The 'wand' was the penis; the talisman was placed in the altar, symbol for the womb.

The only immediate result of this operation was a violent and unnatural wind storm. 'The wind storm is very interesting,' wrote Parsons to his Most Beloved Father, 'but that is not what I asked for.'

In February 1946, the gestation period ended and the elemental in human form appeared. Frater 210 wrote exultingly to Crowley, 'I have my elemental! She turned up one night after the conclusion of the Operation, and has been with me since, although she goes back to New York next week. She has red hair and slant green eyes as specified. If she returns she will be dedicated as I am dedicated!' Her name was Marjorie Cameron.

Crowley replied, 'I am particularly interested in what you have written to me about the elemental, because for some little time past I have been endeavouring to intervene *personally* in this matter on your behalf. I would however have you recall Lévi's aphorism: "The love of the Magus for such things is insensate and may destroy him."

With his Scarlet Woman (Marjorie Cameron) and in the

presence of Hubbard, Parsons began to perform IX° magic to produce another higher being. 'I can hardly tell you,' he wrote somewhat incoherently to the Beast.

I am under the command of extreme secrecy. I have had the most important – devastating experience of my life between February 2nd and March 4th. I believe it was the result of the IX° working with the girl who answered my elemental summons. I have been in direct touch with One who is most Holy and Beautiful as mentioned in *The Book of the Law*. I cannot write the name at present. First instructions were received direct through Ron, the seer. I have followed them to the letter. There was a desire for incarnation. I do not yet know the vehicle, but it will come to me, bringing a secret sign. I am to act as instructor guardian guide for nine months; then it will be loosed on the world. That is all I can say now. . .

Not the sort of letter to please the Beast, and he replied thus: 'I thought I had a most morbid imagination, as good as any man's but it seems I have not. I cannot form the slightest idea what you can possibly mean . . .' And to Frater Saturnus in New York, Crowley wrote, 'Apparently Parsons or Hubbard or somebody is producing a Moonchild. I get fairly frantic when I contemplate the idiocy of these louts.'

But the 'lout' Hubbard was quietly acquiring through the writings of Crowley those magical secrets which helped him a few years later to found his celebrated Church of Scientology.

The two magicians in Pasadena quarrelled and Hubbard ran off with Betty in Parsons' yacht. Frater 210 put on his magic robe, seized his wand, entered the magic circle, and performed the Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, which is preliminary to all magical work, then a full invocation of Bartzabel, the spirit of Mars, whose aid he sought. Result: a squall blew the yacht on to the rocks. 'I have them tied up; they cannot move without going to jail,' he wrote gleefully.

Dr Hubbard says with his usual frankness that he joined the Church of Thelema in California only to break up black magic in America. He 'rescued a girl they were using. The black magic group was dispersed and destroyed and has never recovered.' 1

Crowley dismissed Parsons as a failure, as he had dismissed Fuller, Neuburg, Mudd, Achad, and the rest; his final word on

1 The Church of Scientology: letter published in the *Sunday Times*, 28 December 1969.

Dr Parsons (Frater 210) was: 'He has got a miraculous illumination which rimes with nothing, and he has apparently lost all his personal independence.'

In 1949, Parsons, feeling that he was mature enough for a magical step forward, took the Oath of the Abyss, that is he attempted to unite his consciousness with the Universal Consciousness; and he gave himself the magical name of Belarion Armiluss Al Dajjal AntiChrist. He did not know it but he was in the grip of a psychosis. It is not surprising, therefore, that three years later he literally blew himself up in a so-called accident with fulminate of

mercury in his experimental laboratory at Pasadena.

After the departure of Pearl, Crowley continued, of course, to perform sexual magic with this or that woman. The objects of these operations were the same as before: money, 'sanity/youth', a magical son. But sexual magic too must have a stop, and in June 1940, Crowley recorded in his diary something he had not recorded before, had no occasion to record: 'Weak erection.' The end was in sight. During the same year he began again to take heroin for his asthma, a drug from which he seems to have weaned himself since his addiction during the Cefalu period and later.

His next creative task was the writing of *The Book of Thoth*, an interpretation of the tarot according to the Cabbala (the connection between the two systems had been taught in the Golden Dawn), and especially in the light of his own philosophy of *thelema*. The many stilted pictures which the book contains were drawn and painted by Frieda, Lady Harris, according to Crowley's instructions. (She was the wife of the Chief Liberal Whip, Sir Percy Harris, Bt.) Crowley had met her during 1937 and had helped her through the portals of the dormant mystical Order of the A:A: She took the name of Tzaba, 'Hosts', which adds up to 93; this is also the number of the *thelema* current which she was trying to tap. *The Book of Thoth* was published in an edition of only 200 copies during 1944.

In April 1944, the bombing of London finally drove him from his lodgings at 93 Jermyn Street, Piccadilly, to the Bell Inn, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire. 'A most delightful, really old, inn, big

1 In the summer of 1920, when he was forty-four years of age and at his Abbey of Thelema, he wrote: 'I note that my erection is strong and lasting all these days – it was never better in my whole life... and I have no trouble in self-mastery either. We may then definitely assert that big doses of cocaine impair erection.'

open fire, food incredibly good. But *nothing* to do, and no one to talk to. I shall be forced to work – and at once,' he wrote in his diary on his first day there. He stayed at the Bell Inn until the following January, when he was recommended a boarding-house at Hastings, Sussex. He asked the *Yi King* if he should go there and received hexagram XLIX, *Ko*, for an answer which he interpreted as 'You bet!'

On 17 January 1945, he went to live, and die, at 'Netherwood', the Ridge, Hastings, a large, and to me sombre, 19th-century mansion standing in its own grounds, hidden from the road by tall trees. It has since been demolished.

He still smoked a strong, good tobacco, perique, and ate plenty of sweets and sugar (five or six spoonfuls to each cup of tea); during these war years they were regularly sent to him, along with money, silk ties, and other things, by his devoted American

followers.

'You should meet Aleister Crowley,' Clifford Bax said to me. He added drily, 'I'll have him sent to London for you,' as if Crowley was a piece of carved ivory.

I did not wish to bother Bax with the packing problem so I made the journey to Hastings, taking Rupert Gleadow with me.

Word went up to his room that we had arrived.

I heard his slow footsteps on the stairs and down the passage. As he was about to enter the room, I drew back to take the full impact.

He was not much more than medium height, slightly bent, and clad in an old-style, plus-four suit with silver buckles below the knee. In his eyes was a puzzled, pained look. He had a thin, goatee beard and a moustache, and his head, in spite of tufts of hair on the sides, seemed no more than a skull. The Logos of the Aeon of Ra-Hoor-Khuit seemed to have shrunk into his clothes, all the fleshiness had vanished from his face.

'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law,' he intoned in a nasal, fussy voice.

The Wickedest Man in the World looked rather exhausted – whether from wickedness or from old age I did not then know.

A large seal ring engraved with *Ankh-f-n-Khonsu* ('His life is in Khonsu,' the moon god of Thebes), in hieroglyphics, was on his finger, and a brooch with the image of Thoth was on his silk tie. During the Late Period in Egypt (663–525 BC) Crowley had been the priest, Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, and the ecstatic verses on the stele

of this priest outlined the state of affairs which was to occur in the New Aeon of Horus, or the present age, initiated by Crowley during 1904. It was those verses which had awakened in Crowley remembrance of his incarnation in ancient Egyptian times. It was all very simple and straightforward.

It was a rather awkward meeting, taking place as it did in such ordinary circumstances; the Brocken would have been a more suitable place. As soon as Crowley realized that my companion was Rupert Gleadow, the astrologer, we plunged straight away into the subject of the stars and their influence.

'I think that there is only a fraction of one per cent of truth in astrology,' said Crowley.

I found this opinion, from a man who had been casting horoscopes all his life, rather unexpected.¹

'There's more to it than that,' replied Gleadow.

I began to feel there was something a little strange about Crowley. It was difficult to say what exactly. Apart from the ring and the brooch, and his peculiar sweetish smell, he could be considered, I thought, an ordinary old man with upward turning eyebrows; and yet there was a quality of remoteness about him that made him different. I can best describe this quality by saying that it suggested that he cared very little for the usual preoccupations of mankind. But he had one failing common to the generality of men: he was vain and did not want to depart without leaving as great a mark upon the earth as possible.

The sweet odour was due to his use of the holy consecrating oil of Abra-Melin, the oil which was said to have run down Aaron's beard.

I introduced a subject which went to the heart of the matter. 'It's a pity magic's fallen into disuse these days,' I said.

Crowley did not agree that it had, and he mentioned the name

1 When strangers, seeking Crowley's advice, wrote to him, he plunged into the heart of the matter by setting up their horoscope – upon receiving the time and place of their birth. He wrote to a certain Monsieur André Pigné thus: 'Your horoscope illustrates your life very well. You ought certainly to be firmly attached to a woman of great sexual experience, not a professional. Probably a woman of 40 would be much better than a younger one. It is clear that you need a thorough education in this matter.' Monsieur Pigné replied: 'I know it, but unfortunately it is not easy to find such a woman, for although I could offer her many things, I am not a millionaire. Moreover, I do not dance, and though I am far from being ugly, I am not very handsome as some men are.'

of a man who lived in north-west London. 'He fell out with an associate – they quarrelled, I think, over a woman.' For a moment Crowley stared grimly at the worn carpet. 'Well, he raised a malignant current,' he said in his slow but emphatic voice, 'and his friend's house caught fire and burnt down.'

He invited us to luncheon but excused himself; he always ate in his room, he said, but he would see us afterwards. I wondered what concoction he was going to consume privately; later I discovered that it was nothing more involved than a boiled egg and an injection of heroin.

Luncheon for Gleadow and me was served in the adjoining dining-room. Pinned on the wall were the 'House Rules'.

Guests are requested not to tease the Ghosts.

Breakfast will be served at 9 a.m. to the survivors of the Night. The Hastings Borough Cemetery is five minutes' walk away (ten minutes if carrying body), but only one minute as the Ghost flies.

Guests are requested not to cut down bodies from trees.

The Office has a certain amount of used clothing for sale, the property of guests who have no longer any use for earthly raiment.

These sentiments were not in Crowley's style and it was not, anyhow, his boarding-house: they were presumably the efforts of the eccentric proprietor, a little man with a beard. It was not surprising that Crowley had come to stay here.

After luncheon, we went for a walk in the garden; I looked up at a bay window surrounded by ivy on the first floor, behind

which, I supposed, our warlock was having a nap.

He soon reappeared; he was carrying a bottle of brandy and some glasses. As he poured out the brandy, he said that it had cost him £10 on the black market. Then he produced a cigar case and offered us Coronas. I was glad to think that, although he was not living in opulence, he had been able to supply himself with a few basic luxuries.

We began talking about the end of the world, a subject which seemed to fascinate him. His expression grew thoughtful and he said in a low voice, 'History enlightens us. The ancient Hebrews believed that the end of the world would come after seven thousand years from the creation.' He paused, sipped his brandy. 'Next, we have the Gospel prophecies: Christ was to return within the lifetime of one or more of his disciples and reign on earth for

a thousand years.' Another sip of brandy. This, obviously, was a subject he had at his finger-tips. 'The death of the last Apostle, St John of Patmos, threw matters into some confusion.' When Crowley spoke again, it was with irony. 'The next thing that comes to my mind is the belief that the end of the world would arrive in one thousand years AD, and this belief was so widely spread as to affect the course of secular history. When this prediction failed, there was again confusion.'

He continued in this vein for some while mentioning several False Prophets, such as Joanna Southcott, Charles Piazzi Smyth, the Astronomer Royal, who based his calculations on the Great Pyramid (the Pyramid of Cheops), Anna Kingsford, and a cockney called Noribun; also the famous Nostradamus, a prophet who has not yet been proved false. Crowley mentioned James Laver's recently-published book on Nostradamus.

'Nostradamus,' he said, 'computed that the end of the world

would arrive in 1999.'

He was not impressed by this prediction. 'As a matter of fact,' he said, coming at last to the point, 'the world was destroyed by fire on March the 20th, 1904.'

'But we are still here,' I murmured.

'That is, according to the Initiated Doctrine.'

I asked him if there was any literature on the subject. He replied that there was, and before we left he gave each of us a pamphlet in a stiff blue paper cover entitled *The Book of the Law*, 'Issued by the Church of Thelema, 1003 S. Orange Grove Ave, Pasadena, Calif.'

I promised Crowley to come again and to read the proofs, when they were available, of his forthcoming anthology of poems, *Olla*.

'Do you play chess?' he asked me as he saw us to the door.

'No, I don't,' I replied, and unthinkingly added, 'but I know how to.'

'I wish I did,' he said drily; 'I've been trying to learn for the last

sixty years.'

My subsequent visits to Crowley added little to my first impression. His cryptographic jottings on many little squares of paper show exactly how ill and vexed he was in his last years, explaining his threatening, insane letters to tradespeople and friends. He recorded the anguish of being faced with 'long, lonely boring evenings'; and of being stifled and crushed until his eager, trembling fingers, with long, tobacco-stained fingernails, grasped the

syringe and he injected in his armpit the only substance which brought brief relief.

No. Try \(\frac{1}{3}\) grain: will that fill the quota? Done. 5.15 p.m. Certainly I want heroin; but almost anything else would do just as well! It's boredom and A[nno] D[omini]! A girl or a game of chess would fill the gap. But I've just not enough pep to start revision or research. 7 p.m. Yes, this dose set going a mournful train of thought – mostly about my lost valuables. All my careless folly. What an ass I am! Will heroin help me to forget it?

His daily intake of heroin rose from two or three grains to as many as eleven grains, which is sufficient to kill a roomful of people, one-eighth of a grain being the largest usual dose.

His sense of humour did not desert him and between his black rages and tears he would jest like a schoolboy. On the first occasion he raised in my presence an emaciated arm to inject himself with the power that sustained him, he apologised, and suggested that I might care to leave the room.

'Not at all,' I replied. 'Can I help?'

He explained that recently an army officer had shown such a distasteful face when he had prepared himself for the syringe that he had gone next door to the bathroom. 'I left the bedroom door open, and from behind the bathroom door I bent down to the keyhole and began to squeal like a stuck pig. When I came out I found that my poor friend had almost fainted.'

Crowley died from myocardial degeneration and chronic bronchitis on the night of 1 December 1947, leaving beneath his pillow a parchment talisman in Enochian consecrated 'for a great treasure'. He was seventy-two years of age. Throughout the summer, he had grown weaker and his death was expected. The house-keeper of Netherwood confessed to me that she wished he would die, for she could not bear the sight of him. There was certainly something odd, if not evil, about him; he had become to all visible appearance what he had long claimed to be, a Magus or a Secret Chief, an archetypal figure that one associates with the devil.

He did not want to die, and as he passed into a coma, the tears flowed down his white cheeks. Sister Tzaba was with him; she held his twitching hands and caught his last words, 'I am perplexed...'

The breath had not long departed from him when someone crept up the stairs, entered the room where the body lay and stole his gold watch.

In Konx Om Pax he had written:

Bury me in a nameless grave!
I came from God the world to save.
I brought them wisdom from above:
Worship, and liberty, and love.
They slew me for I did disparage
Therefore Religion, Law and Marriage.
So be my grave without a name
That earth may swallow up my shame!

Throughout his life he had imagined his death and funeral as wholly fantastic events; but when, during his last year, he made his final will, he did not ask his executors, as he had done in the will he made in 1931, to see that he was buried in Westminster Abbey, or embalmed in the ancient Egyptian manner like Christian Rosencreutz, or that the urn containing his ashes should be placed on the broad ledge of the cliff behind Boleskine House, or on top of the Rock at Cefalu. He simply asked Louis Wilkinson who had been his friend for many years, to read the *Hymn to Pan*, *The Book of the Law*, and the Collects and the Anthem from his *Gnostic Mass*.

On Friday, 5 December 1947, Crowley was cremated at Brighton. It was a cold, grey afternoon. The followers and friends of the Beast took their places in the chapel. Among them was Gilbert Bayley who knew Achad and had known Mudd (he had helped Mudd as much as he could), Sisters Tzaba and Ilyarun, and Brothers Volo Intelligere and Aossic. Also the poet Kenneth Hopkins; he had never met Crowley but he was an old friend of Louis Wilkinson.

The coffin was borne in, covered with flowers.

Wilkinson suddenly appeared, carrying a copy of *Liber Legis* and *Magick*; he mounted the rostrum and immediately began to recite the *Hymn to Pan*.

Thrill with lissome lust of the light,
O man! My man!
Come careering out of the night
Of Pan! Io Pan!
Io Pan! Come over the sea

1 William Joyce, 'Lord Haw-Haw', suggested in a broadcast from Germany during World War II that as Britain's Intercession Services did not seem to be doing much good, Aleister Crowley should be asked to celebrate a Black Mass in Westminster Abbey.

The ugly walls of the chapel dissolved and the cold vanished as the powerful, sonorous voice declaimed

> Give me the sign of the Open Eye, And the token erect of thorny thigh, And the word of madness and mystery . . .

He did not read the whole of *The Book of the Law*, as Crowley had requested, but selected passages, of a kind which would create less of a sensation on the small crowd of newspaper reporters who were present.

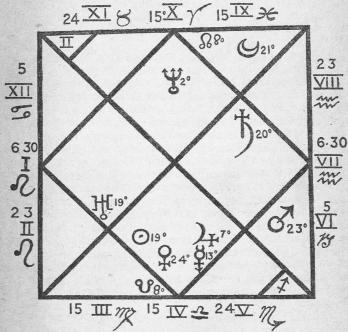
This was the 'Gnostic Requiem' which brought a protest from the Brighton Council. 'We shall take all necessary steps,' said the chairman of the committee responsible for the crematorium, 'to prevent such an incident occurring again.' As Crowley lived, so he died.

> Thou, who art I, beyond all I am. Who hast no nature and no name. Who art, when all but Thou are gone. Thou, centre and secret of the Sun. Thou, hidden spring of all things known And unknown, Thou aloof, alone, Thou, the true fire within the reed Brooding and breeding, source and seed Of life, love, liberty, and light, Thou beyond speech and beyond sight. Thee I invoke, my faint fresh fire Kindling as mine intents aspire. Thee I invoke, abiding one, Thee, centre and secret of the Sun, And that most holy mystery Of which the vehicle am I!

Notes on the horoscope of Aleister Crowley by Rupert Gleadow.

Crowley was born, by his own account, between 11.00 pm and 12.00 pm on 12 October 1875 at Leamington Spa. He put up his own horoscope for 11.30 as an average time, but from the events of his life it seems probable that the true time was about 11.16, or possibly earlier.

The only comment he makes is to the effect that Leo was just rising, implying that he had narrowly escaped having Cancer for



The figure Genethliacal of Edward Alexander Crowley

his ascendent. It is not uncommon for people to be proud of having their ascendent in the royal and solar sign of Leo instead of in Cancer, and no doubt this fortified Crowley's feeling that he should be looked up to as a Master. Since he died, however, it has been discovered that the zodiac was originally measured not from

459

the invisible moving equinox, but from the stars, and that the constellations are therefore more important than the signs. By this doctrine of the ancient world Crowley was under the Crab, with his Sun in Virgo, and his Moon between Aquarius and Pisces.

In itself the horoscope has nothing particularly devilish about it. It is not so obviously bad as the horoscope of Luther, which the Pope's astrologer published in the hope of proving that Luther would go to hell. It even has a conjunction of sun and Venus in the fourth house which ought to betoken an affectionate and family-loving disposition. But education can turn any trait into its opposite. The horoscope shows the inherent nature of the child, it cannot be expected to show also the perverse character of the parents. Besides, this one note of affection is here overruled by the 'aspects' of the sun and moon.

For both sun and moon have some curiously close and powerful aspects, and all to the less comfortable planets. Those of the sun indicate a severe and wilful nature, fond of drastic action and extremely unaccommodating; those of the moon declare an inclination to behave violently from unconscious motives. The good planets hardly enter into the picture, being far down under the earth and enfeebled by an opposition of Neptune. The result is a great lack of friendliness and also a marked lack of success. The aspects for 8 to 10 April 1904, when The Book of the Law was dictated in Cairo, showed unambiguously that this great work would produce as much humiliation and disappointment as prestige. Furthermore, the journey to Cairo brought the natal opposition of Saturn and Uranus to the horizon, with Saturn passing right over it at the time: and any 'new dispensation' born under such aspect is bound to fail, since Saturn, representing the old, successfully opposes Uranus representing the new.

That Crowley's first marriage was a failure is not in any way surprising; his was an unloving nature, and at the time of the wedding Saturn was passing over the point of his 'house of marriage.'

His choice of Cefalu as a location for the Abbey of Thelema was unwise. For it brought this midheaven to the conjunction of his Neptune; and sure enough the sun was passing over the very degree of that Neptune on the day when he was expelled by the Italian authorities.

Even more striking were the aspects for the time in 1916 when he crucified a toad: Mars by progression and Uranus by transit had both come to conjunction of Saturn and opposition of Uranus in the birth-chart; and this combination of planets is notorious for violence and cruelty.

His second marriage went no better than his first. It took place under aspects which he describes but does not interpret; and he fails to mention that at the time his Venus had just come to the trine of Neptune, which augured a lack of realism in any affairs of love; and there were also two transits of malefics to his natal moon which ought to have warned him.

INDEX

Abra-Melin, 36-7, 42, 43, 81, 82, 88, 96, 123, 148, 159, 257, 300, 320 n., 404, 424 Ab-ul-Diz, 157 ff., 241, 244 Agamya Guru Paramahamsa, Sri Mahatma, 179 Aifha, Soliman ben, 179 Aiwass (Aiwaz), 9, 14, 54 f., 83, 111, 118, 122, 128 n., 142, 157, 283 ff., 317, 372, 402–3 Alexander VI, Pope, 14 Alexander vi, 1 ope, 14 Alexandra, Queen, 174 Almeira, 265 Alpine Club, the, 29, 98 Alpine Journal, The, 26 n., 107 Amalantrah, 241 ff. Amatore, 285 AMORC, 438 Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, 14, 86, 87, 96, 221, 266, 272, 362, 387-8, 424, 444-5, 450 Anthroposophical Society, 184 Apollonius of Tyana, 17, 70 Archer, Ethel, 148 Armstrong, L. S., 421, 423 Atlantis, 10 Augoeides, 115, 147 Aumont, Gérard, 395 Avicenna, 114

Back, Ivor, 89, 94
Baker, Julian L., 31
Baphomet, 180-81, 183, 184, 224, 245-7, 251, 258, 294, 392
Barron, William George, 392, 395, 398
Bass, Kasimira, 404-5, 408
Baudelaire, Charles, 27, 30, 66
Bauer, Paul, 417

Bax, Clifford, 92-3, 450 Bayley, Gilbert, 427, 455 Beardsley, Aubrey, 29 n. Beaverbrook, Lord, 378, 379, 401, 422, 433 Beerbohm, Max, 29 n., 88 Bennett, Allan, 38-9, 40, 41, 55, 58, 60, 79, 93, 115, 122, 153, 191, 316, 320 Bennett, Arnold, 72, 87, 330 Bennett, Frank, 300 ff. Bennett, Mr Justice, 433 Beresford, J. D., 328, 434, 436 Bergson, Henri, 43, 77 Berliner Tageblatt, 417 Berridge, Dr. 153-4 Besant, Annie, 389, 404 Bevan, Gerard Lee, 326 Bhima Sen Pratap, 179 Bickers, Betty, 264, 332, 333 Bickers, Sheridan, 264 Bigland, Eileen, 334 n. Binetti, Margaret, 403 Bishop, George Archibald, 30 Bishop, Tom Bond (Crowley's uncle), 30 Blake, William, 114 Blakemore, Trevor, 226 Blakeney, T. S., 26 Blavatsky, Helena Petrovna, 22-3, 30 n., 32-3, 118, 146, 184, 185-6, 210, 398 Bois, Jules, 44 Book of the Law, The, 9, 84–8, 93, 118, 121, 122, 132, 158, 184, 224, 234 ff., 263, 272, 277, 278 n., 310, 316 n., 326, 330, 361 ff., 367, 372, 377, 383, 385, 391, 396–7, 398, 422, 424, 443, 448, 456, 458

Booth-Clibborn, Arthur Augustine. 324-5 Bosanquet, Claud, 348 Bott, Percival, 89 Bottomley, Horatio, 347 Bourbon, Don Luis Fernando de. Bourcier, 370 Brahim, Mohammed ben, 369 Brooksmith, Pearl, 433 ff., 441, 449 Brunnig, Max, 430 Bucknill, Mr Justice, 148 Buddicom, Jacintha, 20 Bulwer, Edward Robert (Lord Lytton), 17, 36 Bunyan, John, 312, 379 Burrard, Sidney, 98 Burton, Richard, 59-60, 70, 111, 112 Busch, Bertha, 429 ff., 437 Butler, Henry Montagu, 354 ff. Butts, Mary, 214, 292, 299 ff., 310 ff., 329, 332

Cagliostro (Giuseppe Balsamo), 18 Cakes of Light, 88, 272, 299 Cameron, Marjorie, 447 Camille, 60, 292, 403 Cammell, C. R., 78 Carson, Edward, 436 Carter, Col., 410, 424 Carter, Edward, 254 Carter, Howard (Hermes), 265, 274, 340, 344 n. Casaubon, Meric, 129 Casement, Roger, 230, 430 Cellini, Benvenuto, 282 Charles I, 351 n. Cheron, Jane, 207, 221, 265-6 Chesterton, G. K., 92 Choronzon, 137 ff., 414 Clarke, Herbert, 378 Clarkson, Willie, 50 Cleugh, James, 417 Clymer, R. Swinburne, 438 Collie, Norman, 26 Collins, William, 328, 330, 332, 413, Columbus, Christopher, 348 Conrad, Joseph, 210 Constable & Co., 434, 437 Conway, William Martin, 55, 62, 63, Coomaraswarmy, Alice Ethel, 239-Coomaraswarmy, Ananda K., 239 Cowie, George Macnie, 260, 261 Cracknell, Miss, 46, 49 Crowley, Aleister, his Abbey, 54, 270 ff., 336 ff. and Abra-Melin, 42 ff.

as Alys, 412 n. ancestry, 22-3 his autobiography, 20-21, 23-5, 30, 39–40, 45–6, 53, 92, 96, 243, 251, 258, 278, 303, 330, 335, 368, 385, 412, 418 his bankruptcy, 437-8 baptismal names, 23, 27 Laird of Boleskine, 34, 42, 45-6. 73, 77 sacrifices a cat, 25, 341 as Prince Chioa Khan, 80-81 and drugs, 39, 115, 192 ff., 251, 274, 276, 283, 315 ff., 363, 391, 453-4 makes himself invisible, 52-3 becomes an Ipsissimus, 297-8 and the Golden Dawn, 29-41 passim, 44 ff., 51 and gonorrhoea, 25 his knighthood, 149 his Magical Record, 49, 54 n., 84, 121, 155 n., 167, 228, 280, 291, 293, 362, 413 his magical weapons, 157 ff., 272 as Mathers's Envoy Plenipotentiary, 49, 51 his mother, 28, 56 mountaineering, 25-6, 29, 55 ff., 61 ff., 97 ff. mystical illuminations, 26, 43, 114-15, 194 ff. his paintings, 239, 255-7, 258, 272, 275, 285, 294, 296-7 and Plymouthism, 23-4 poetry, 27, 29, 38, 51, 58, 69, 78, 87–9, 91–2, 110, 119, 121, 146, 151, 176, 192, 197, 258–60, 345–6, 380, 455–6 and pornography, 87, 89, 90, 92, 112, 174, 178, 434-5 loses potency, 449 his psychology, 53-4, 77 his rites of Eleusis, 152 ff. and the Serpent's Kiss, 224 his sex-appeal ointment, 412 his Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, 87-8 as Count Syareff, 38 and syphilis, 54 loses virginity, 39-40 Crowley, Edward (father of Aleister), 13, 22-3, 24 Crowley, Emily Bertha (mother of Aleister), 28, 76, 239 Crowley, Lola Zaza, 122, 150, 427 Crowley, Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith, 89-90, 114, 118, 119 Crowley, Robert, 22

Cruze, Eddie, 439 Cunard, Nancy, 224 Curio, the Elder, 412 n. Darby, John Nelson, 23 Darwin, Charles, 348

Darwin, Charles, 348 Dashwood, Francis, 270 Dee, John, 20, 111, 128-9, 131, 133, 178, 211, 278 n., 282, 293 De Quincey, 330 Domela, Thomas, 362 Dorn, Heinrich van, 19 Doughty, Harry, 55, 359-60 Douglas, James, 330, 332, 385 Dowson, Ernest, 29 n. Duchamp, Marcel, 292 n. Duncan, Isadora, 154, 174, 224 Duncombe-Jewell, L. C. R., 73, 119 Dunsany, Lord, 245 n. Duranty, Walter, 199, 207, 219 Dyrenfurth, Gunther, 99

Eckartshausen, 31, 297 Eckenstein, Oscar, 26, 55 ff., 60 ff., 94, 150 n., 320 n. Eddy, J. P., 435, 437 Ellis, Havelock, 29 n. Epstein, Jacob, 333 Erna, 313–14 Evans, Charles, 98 Evans, Montgomery, 403–4 Everest, Mt, 98

Farr, Florence (Mrs Emery), 35, 45, 47, 49–50, 51
Farwell, Lord Justice, 148
Fenton, De Wend, 152
Fludd, Robert, 114
Foster, Jane (Sister Hilarion), 233 ff., 264–5
Fraux, Helen, 292, 314
Freshfield, Douglas, 98
Freud, Sigmund, 244, 303, 313
Fryer, Peter, 11, 30
Fuller, J. F. C., 94, 120, 121, 147, 148, 153, 154, 352, 355, 357, 362, 434, 448

Gardner, Frederick Leigh, 34
Gaucher, André, 44
Gauguin, Paul, 294
Gaunt, Guy, 232, 263
George V, 363
George, Madeleine, 253
Germer, Karl (Brother Saturnus),
9, 391, 396, 405, 406, 414, 419,
424, 425, 430, 435, 443, 446,
448
Gleadow, Rupert, 451 ff.

Golden Dawn, Hermetic Order of,

9, 31 ff., 38, 45 ff., 71, 77, 84, 111, 147 ff., 152, 376, 406, 441 Goldman, Emma, 378, 379 n. Goldring, Douglas, 313 Goldston, Edward, 413, 414, 417 Gomes, Ferreira, 422 Gomez, Doris, 235 Gormley, Lieut. Colonel, 94, 154 n. Gosse, Edmund, 23 Gouraud, Aimée, 222-3, 314 Graham, W. W., 98 Grant, Kenneth (Brother Aossic), 287, 418 n., 441, 455 Grau, Albin, 397 Gray (bookseller), 433 Gray, Charles, 11, 349 n., 439 Gregg, F. J., 227 Gros, Dr. 323 Guillarmod, J. Jacot, 62 ff., 94 ff., 100-102, 103 ff., 326 Gurdiieff, 303 n.

Hamilton, Gerald, 430-31 Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph von, 181, 246 Hamnett, Nina, 148, 292, 386, 434 ff. Hamon, Count Louis, 148 Hanchant, Wilfred, 421, 431-2 Hansi (Dionysus), 254, 264, 268, 340, 376, 383 ff. Harris, Frank, 148, 233, 256, 263, 371, 374, 378, 433, 437 Harris, Frieda, 449, 454, 455 Harris, Percy, 449 Harrison, Austin, 208, 210, 229, 232, 327, 335 Hartmann, Franz, 179, 185 Hegel, G. W. F., 298 Henderson, Wyn, 417 Henley, William Ernest, 72 Herodotus, 212, 312 Hilbery, Malcolm, 434, 436 Hirsig, Alma, 254, 255, 340, 376, 383 Hirsig, Leah (Alostrael, the Ape of Thoth), 254 ff., 261, 262, 264, 265, 267 ff., 415, 423 Hitler, A., 121, 224, 444 Hollis, Helen, 233, 278 Honorious, Pope, 70 Hopkins, Kenneth, 455 Horniman, Annie, 43, 45

Horniman, Frederick J., 43

Home, Daniel Dunglas, 17

Hubbard, Ron, 446, 447-8

Huxley, Aldous, 330, 423

Hunt, C. de Vidal, 407-8, 410, 422

Howe, Ellic, 10, 32

Hunter, E. A., 49 ff.

IAO, 81, 273, 345

I Ching (Yi King), 248, 268, 273, 275, 279, 290, 291, 293, 295, 296, 297, 299, 313–14, 326, 332, 335, 342, 343, 349, 376, 378, 380, 386, 390, 402, 410, 414, 418, 443, 450

Isabella Isis Selene Hecate Artemis Diana Hera Jane, 361 Isherwood, Christopher, 431 Isis, 364

Jaeger, Hanni, 417 ff., 441
John Bull, 14, 263, 348, 363, 413,
417, 418, 424, 433
Johnson, Samuel, 10
Jones, Charles Stansfeld (Brother
Achad), 227, 233 ff., 240, 241,
250 n., 252, 263, 334, 357, 402,
403, 448, 455
Jones, George Cecil, 31, 39, 96, 121,
150 n., 153, 376
Joyce, James, 330, 414
Joyce, William, 455 n.
Julius Caesar, 412
Jung, C. G., 134 n., 244
Juxon. Bishop., 351 n.

Jack the Ripper, 30

K2 (Chogo Ri), 57, 62-8, 70, 94, 96 ff., 327 Kafka, Franz, 137 Kangchenjunga, 96 ff., 116, 417, 440 Kelley, Edward, 20, 111, 128 ff., 137, 178, 211, 282-3, 447 Kellner, Karl, 179, 181, 182, 184, 185 - 6Kelly, Mrs (Crowley's mother-inlaw), 73-4, 75, 94 Kelly, F. F., 76, 80 Kelly, Gerald, 10, 69, 70, 72, 73-4. 75, 77, 89, 110, 120-21, 150, 232 - 3, 320Kelly, Rose, 74 ff., 88 ff., 92, 114, 117 ff., 150-51, 154, 233, 265, 417 Kemp, Harry, 226 Kennedy, Leon, 258 Kéroualle, Louise de, 22 Khan, Prince Chioa (Crowley), 79 ff. Kingsford, Anna, 453 Kirk, Arthur, 354 Klein, Heinrich. 179 Knight, Richard Payne, 205 Knights Templars, 179-80, 187 Knowles, Guy, 62 ff. Knox, R. A., 416 Kothek, Gerda Maria von. 235 Krafft-Ebing, 30

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 389, 390, 404 Küntzel, Martha (sister I.W.E.), 398 ff., 443–4 Kylsant, Lord, 439

Lao-tzu, 14, 173, 274, 418 Larden, 26 Laver, James, 453 Lavroff, Marie, 251 Lawrence, D. H., 413-14, 417 n. Leadbeater, Charles Webster, 389 Lebrun, Albert, 471 Le Calee, Baron, 293 Leo III, Pope, 70 Lévi, Eliphas, 15-18, 36-7, 247 n., 407, 447 Lewin, Louis, 151-2, 318 n. Lewis, H. Spencer, 438 Lincke, Elsa, 249-50 Liseux, Isidore, 70 Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 234 Longstaff, Tom G., 29 Loveday, Raoul, 333 ff., 439 Luther, 457

'M, Mrs,' 71–2
MacBride, Maud Gonne, 77
Machen, Arthur, 35
Maggio, Dr, 341, 343, 344, 347
Maitland, Cecil, 214, 292, 299 ff., 312, 328, 329
Mansfield, Katherine, 274
Marston, Commander, 151
Marx, Eleanor, 182 n.
Marx, Karl, 362
Mathers, Moina, 31, 33, 43–4, 59, 77
Mathers, Samuel Liddell (MacGregor Mathers), 31 ff., 36, 38, 43 ff., 58, 59, 70–71, 72, 77, 81, 86, 88–9, 122, 147–8, 160, 161, 402
Maugham, W. S., 72, 149

Maugham, W. S., 72, 149 Maylard, 26 May, Betty, 271, 333 ff., 382, 436, 439

Miller, Anna Katherine, 14, 240 Minor, Roddie, 240 ff. Miramar, Maria Teresa Ferrari de, 404 ff., 415, 417, 418, 419, 421, 424, 426-7, 428-9, 431 Mischette, the Abbey cat which was

Mischette, the Abbey cat which was sacrificed, 341 Mohammed, Abd el Aziz ben, 390 Molay, Jacques de, 187 Montagu, George (Lord Tankerville), 123-4, 125, 351 Moore, Harry T., 417 n. Moulton, Lord Justice, 148

Moulton, Lord Justice, 148 Mudd, Norman, 92, 202, 348 ff., 418, 423, 433, 448, 455 Mummery, A. F., 26 Murray, Adam Gray, 379, 391 Mussolini, 349, 361, 370

Nechaev, Sergei, 260 Neuberg, Victor Benjamin, 126 ff., 133, 136 ff., 148, 152, 158, 178 ff., 210, 264, 299, 334, 341, 344, 347, 351, 414, 447, 448 Nietzsche, F., 85, 211 Noribun, 453 Nostradamus, 453

Olcott, Henry Steel, 23 Olsen, Dorothy, 381 ff., 441 O.T.O., 9, 179 ff., 227, 255, 392, 410, 441 Otter, Gwendoline, 148, 274 Oxford Mail, 316

Pache, Alexis, 97, 100, 102, 104, 106 Paracelsus, 114 Parry, Reginald St John, 352 ff., 359, 360 Parsons, Helen, 339, 445 Parsons, John Whiteside. 445 ff. Payne, John, 70 Pessoa, Fernando, 419 ff. Pfannl, H., 63 ff. Pigné, André, 451 n. Pindar, Major, 303 n. Pinney, John, 348 Plato, 339 Plotinus, 114 Plymouth Brethren, 13, 23, 24 Poe, E. A., 276 Pollitt, Herbert Charles Jerome, 177 - 8Pougy, Liane de, 177 Poupée (Anne Leah, Crowley's daughter), 273 ff., 285-6 Praz, Mario, 29 Pritchett, V. S., 330 Pythagoras, 114

Quinn, John, 52, 227

Rabelais, François, 70, 84, 270, 439 Raffalovich, George, 148, 154, 208 Rais, Gilles de, 407, 416 Read, H. V., 26 Regardie, Israel, 405, 409–10, 424 ff. Reuss, Theodor (Brother Merlin), 182, 185, 187, 391–2, 438 Revelation, 24, 28 Reymond, Charles, 97, 100, 101, 104 ff. Richards, Grant, 327–8 Righi, Alceste C. Rigo de, 97, 100, 103 ff.
Ringler, Anny, 175–6
Roberts, Warren, 417 n.
Rodd, Peter, 349 n.
Rodd, Rennel, 349 n.
Rodés, Stanislas de, 29 n.
Rodin, Auguste, 72, 294
Rosenkreutz, Christian, 48–9, 51, 455
Rosenroth, Knorr von, 70
Russell, Bertrand, 378
Russell, Cecil Frederick (Brother Genesthai), 287 ff., 296, 301 ff., 334, 340, 435

Saayman, Eddie, 365, 367 Sade, Marquis de, 91 Saint-Germain, Count, 31 Salama, 114 ff. Satan (Crowley's dog), 274 Schneider, Max, 396 Schwob, Marcel, 72 Scrutton, Mr Justice, 153-4 Seabrook, Kate, 261–2 Seabrook, William, 256, 261–2 Sella, Vittoria, 98 Shaw, Bernard, 198, 378 Shelley, P. B., 27, 69, 74, 78, 327 Shumway, Ninette (née Fraux), 265 ff., 383 Simpson, Elaine, 49, 50, 58, 111, 118 - 19Skene, Hener, 154 Smith, Piazzi, 453 Smith, Robinson, 335 Smith, Wilfred T., 445 Smithers, Leonard, 29 Smythe, Frank, 99, 440 Solly, 26 Southcott, Joanna, 453 Speaight, Hugh, 416 Spender, Stephen, 431 Sprengel, Anna, 32, 46, 161 Starr, Meredith, 148 Steiner (an artist), 417 Steiner, Rudolph, 184 Stevenson, P. R., 413–14 Sturges, Mary d'Esté (Sister Vira-kam), 154 ff., 241, 429 Suetonius, 412 n. Sullivan, J. W. N., 292, 327, 376, 423, 434 Sullivan, L., 97 Sullivan, Sylvia, 292 Summers, Montague, 180 Sunday Express, 14, 41, 330, 332, 347-8, 361, 375, 378, 385, 413, Swift, Mr Justice, 435 ff., 441

Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 27, 69, 232 Symons, Arthur, 29 n.

Thaelmann, Ernst, 431
Theosophical Society, 22, 32, 184, 235, 389, 403
Thornton, Edward, 60, 97, 114
Thynne, Major, 414
Tingley, Katherine, 235
Torregiani, Domizio, 349
Traenker, Heinrich, 391–2, 396–7
Trinity College, Cambridge, 25, 28, 36, 92, 417
Trodd, Robert, 361
Trotsky, Leon, 362
Tsaida, Mohammed, 279

Unamuno, Miguel de, 378

Victoria, Queen, 55–6, 263 Viereck, George Sylvester, 229 ff. Vitobha, 390 Volo Intelligere, 405, 406, 407, 409, 410–11, 414, 418–19, 424, 428, 438, 445, 455

Waddell, Leila, 151 ff., 174, 192–3, 230
Waite, Arthur Edward, 15
Watkins, John, 412
Wesseley, V., 63 ff.

Westcott, William Wynn, 32 ff., 46, 49 Westley, Helen, 236 Whineray, E. P., 122–3 Whistler, James Abbott McNeil, 76

Whistler, James Abbott McNeil, 76 Whiteley, Mr Justice, 439 Wilde, Oscar, 29 n., 177, 331, 379, 436 Wilkinson, 49-50 Wilkinson, Louis, 455

Williams, Lord Justice, 148 Windram, James, 260 n. Witkowski, 58 Wolfe, Jane, 263, 264–5, 278 ff., 296, 299, 301, 335, 341, 345, 347, 348, 361 Woodford, Alphonsus, 31–2 Woodman, William Robert, 32, 33 Woodroffe, Sir John, 185

Woodroffe, Sir John, 185 Workman, Fanny, 64 Workman, William, 64 Wright, Almroth, 234 Wright, Thomas, 205

Yates, Edmund, 22 Yeats, J. B., 227 Yeats, W. B., 31, 50, 51, 402 Younghusband, Francis, 63

Zola, Emile, 330 Zolar, Xul, 376, 381

MAYFLOWER'S MASTERWORKS OF THE OCCULT

The Great Beast by John Symonds spearheads a new list of the finest in Occult Non-Fiction, the occult being all sciences concealed or "covered over" by the mechanical straightnesses of society, particularly Western, that hide from the senses and from understanding the more liberating facts and fantasies of our cosmos.

ALREADY AVAILABLE IN MAYFLOWER ARE:

Pauwels and Bergier
Jo Sheridan
Sybil Leek
Cyril Vosper
Arthur Lyon
Ronald C. Davidson
Michel Gauguelin

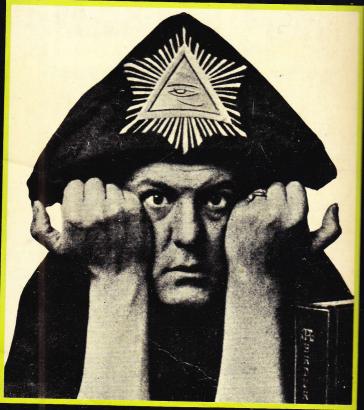
The Morning of the Magicians
What Your Hands Reveal
Book of Fortune Telling
The Mindbenders
Satan Wants you
Astrology
Astrology and Science

COMING SOON:

Colin Wilson David Conway Pauwels and Bergier Anthony Masters The Occult
Magic: An Occult Primer
Eternal Man
Natural History of the Vampire

I am the Beast, I am the Word of the Aeon I spend my soul in blazing torrents that roar into Night, streams that with molten tongues hiss as they lick. I am a hell of a Holy Guru

Pleister Crowley



U.K.60p CANADA \$2.50 SOUTH AFRICA R1.40 SINGAPORE \$6.00 AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND \$1.85

BIOGRAPHY/OCCULT 583 12195 0